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The Week

THE statement which the members of the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University has recently issued in favor of a revision of the foreign debt settlements emphasizes a desirable improvement in American fiscal policy. It is unwise for the American government to negotiate with the Allied governments contracts which involve the payments of many millions of dollars over a period of sixty years. Either the debtors will not live up to their contracts, or if they do, the effort to pay will cost them so dear that they will cherish bitter resentment against their common creditor. The debts were created under wholly abnormal conditions of international barter, and they cannot be paid under normal conditions without grievous and wasteful stresses—both financial and psychological. The existing and proposed settlements will have to be revised eventually. The statesmanlike course for the American government is to recognize the expediency of revision, and to use it as an excuse for the calling of a general conference for the liquidation of war liabilities.

THE form in which the Columbia political scientists have cast their statement is not, however, as unexceptionable as its object. Its arguments will relieve the feelings of its authors and of the European peoples whose cause they are pleading, but if its object is to convert the American opponents of the proposed revision, it is poorly phrased and prepared to accomplish the purpose. Its fundamental argument is that when the debts were incurred the United States and its European associates were fighting in a common cause, and that this fact gave to France, Great Britain, Belgium and Italy the moral right to call upon the United States for unlimited assistance in furnishing them with munitions and means of subsistence. This argument which has been used so frequently in Europe has always seemed to us unrealistic and unsound. It was invented in Europe for the purpose of proving that the debtor nations are morally justified in protesting against paying the debt and that the creditor is morally contemptible because it is placing its dollars in the scale against the lives of European soldiers. This contention simply is not fair and Americans who do not continue to be hypnotized by Allied propaganda know that it is unfair.

THROUGHOUT the War individuals and nations universally sacrificed human lives for the benefit of victory, but whenever they spent or borrowed one another's money for the same purpose, a careful account was kept of the transaction and, if possible, the debt or the interest was collected. This was true of the transactions among the Allies. No one nation was supposed to be under any obligation to place its economic resources at the service of its associates without compensation. Japan was one of the Allied nations from the start, but we have yet to hear that she placed or was asked to contribute a pound of rice or a three-inch gun without being paid. All during the War the British government bought large quantities of food, munitions and equipment in Canada, but the Canadians were always remunerated in full at the current high prices, and Canada has never been considered a

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moral reprobate for exacting remuneration. The American government required hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of supplies and services from its Allies, but it always paid for them in full. If any American fighting or charitable organization ever asked for or received anything in Europe for nothing, it has successfully concealed the fact. Many Europeans seem sincerely to believe that in international transactions it is the function of America to give without compensation and it is the right of Europe to receive without obligation. American popular opinion vaguely realizes the prevalence in Europe of this view of America's international mission, and the fact accounts for the indisposition of the American people to entangle themselves any further in European political quarrels and responsibilities.

IN ANOTHER respect also the statement of the Columbia professors proves too much and does less than justice to the official attitude of the United States. It criticizes and condemns the practice of basing the debt settlements on the principle of "capacity to pay." Yet this is the only principle which the Allies have applied or could apply to the debts which are owed to them. They have estimated the German capacity to pay at anywhere from $500,000,000 to $1,000,000,000 a year, and they have never admitted that they would let her off a dollar of this amount unless they had to. They also place and rightly place an extremely high estimate on America's capacity to pay. A large part of their indignation against this country is traceable to their belief that America is able to pay for more of the War than she is legally liable to pay and consequently that she should pay to the limit. They apply the capacity-to-pay principle to their enemy Germany and to their friend the United States, but they do not apply it to themselves. They are emancipated from it by some higher moral law which entitles them to collect in full from Germany and at the same time to be delivered from paying the United States. We are sorry that the Columbia statement connived at this interpretation of the principle. The real objection to the debt settlements concerns the extent to which they tend to ignore it. What France, Italy and Great Britain should pay either in money or in sacrifice of national interest must obviously be determined in part by what they are able to pay. For that reason it is indefensible to spread the payments over sixty years. A trustworthy calculation of what any of them can pay twenty or twenty-five years from now is impossible. In so far as the Allies return to America any part of the war loans, the payments should be confined to twenty-five years at the outside. Within these limits it is possible, accidents apart, to place a fair estimate on capacity to pay.

FINALLY there is another objection to the tendency of the Columbia statement to base the demand for revision on abstract right rather than on statesmanship and expediency. It proposes and looks forward to "an international conference which is to review the entire problem of debt payments and make proposals for readjustment." But the statement while calling for a conference almost in the same breath tries to deprive the United States of all the negotiable assets with which its government might enter such a congress. If it has no moral right to ask for the repayment of the debts, it can urge no valid reason for asking the Allies to give up anything of value to themselves in order to obtain a release. Such a conference might be able to provide an answer for the world's most grievous practical need if it were called upon to liquidate all the abnormal liabilities of the War and the peace, but there is something far more abnormal and dangerous to future peace in the claims which the Allies have against Germany than in the claims which the United States has against the Allies. Yet the Columbia statement morally abolishes the claim of the United States against the Allies without saying a word to place the claims of the Allies against Germany in a similar class. If the general contentions of the Columbia Faculty of Political Science were admitted previous to the calling of such a conference, it would be impossible for even the shrewdest of American negotiators to make it serve as the basis of a general or a permanent settlement. It could only result in the celebration of a public confession by this country that it had been morally wrong in trying to make the Allies pay and that they themselves have incurred no obligation to purchase a release by reducing to a tolerable sum their own mortgage on the future welfare of Germany.

PRESIDENT Coolidge has reversed himself with startling suddenness on the matter of additional cruisers for our navy. A fortnight ago in his budget message he was against any increase in the naval forces of the United States. He did not even propose to ask for funds to build three cruisers already authorized but not yet financed by Congress. But presto and behold! He now appears endorsing a bill introduced in the House by its naval affairs committee calling not for three additional cruisers, but ten. These would cost $140,000,000 to construct and many millions more each year to keep in commission. They would be a net addition to the three vessels which he scorned a few days earlier, as well as three others for which funds have been voted and two more now being built.

IT IS reasonable to suppose that this bill is intended to produce, not ships but a new conference. It is known that our government views with great seriousness the present building of cruisers by England, France, Italy and Japan. Such construction is not technically a violation of the Washington treaty, which did not include vessels of 10,000 tons or less, but actually the powers have gone back to the old armament race, merely excluding battleships and substituting cruisers, destroyers, submarines and airplanes. If our new program were carried out, ac-

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cording to Chairman Butler of the House Naval Affairs Committee, we should have 225,000 tons of cruisers as against Great Britain's 340,000 and Japan's 193,000 and should still be a long way behind the 5-5-3 ratio which was fixed for capital ships. There is something to be said for maintaining our relative position, as a means of forestalling the agitation of our own ultramilitarists who, if we remain substantially below the 5-5-3 ratio, will use that fact as fresh and effective fuel for their own flames.

IT WOULD be far better, of course, to persuade the other nations to stop building; and this is the real purpose of President Coolidge. He has long desired to bring about a new conference to supplement the Washington treaty, and he believes the other nations will be more inclined to listen to reason if faced by the alternative that if they don't, the United States will proceed to outbuild them. On this point it must be said that the President has played his cards rather clumsily; and that the hope of obtaining further armament reduction is at present a slender one. France and Italy are in no mood to accept another invitation to Washington. The only real chance for agreement lies in the proposed disarmament meeting under League auspices in 1927 or 1928; and the history of the preliminary conference shows how small is the chance that it will achieve any substantial measure of success.

THAT the European skies are clearing is shown by the calmness with which the overthrow of the German cabinet has been received. It is generally agreed that when the Reichstag reassembles on Jan. 19 and a new ministry is formed, the Stresemann foreign policies will be followed out, and that he will almost certainly remain at his post. Luther is likely to suceed Marx as Chancellor. The main question unsettled is whether Gessler, the Minister of Defense, will come back. It was because of him that the Marx cabinet fell. The Socialists were angered by the charges that he had built up the Reichswehr as an organ of reaction, was in an illegal relationship with Russia, and was secretly buying munitions from the Soviet government. The Nationalists might have saved the Marx régime, but when their proposal for a reorganization of the cabinet with more places for themselves was rejected, they refused to do so. Germany has been suffering from a minority government of the centre parties; the Chancellor has had to turn to the Socialists or Nationalists for support on various measures, and has been greatly hampered by this necessity. It is hoped that when the Reichstag reassembles a new coalition may be achieved on a broader basis, probably bringing in the Socialists who approve of Stresemann's all-important foreign policies.

THE poetry of Robert Frost is one of our most important national assets. It is not only a public treasury for the use of the discerning among our citizenry, but rich enough to pay back in sound native mintage some of our cultural indebtedness abroad. Though indigenous in stamp, Frost's output proves that he has mined deeply and brings up his wealth from the authentic sources which underlie the world. A steadily widening circle of Frost's appreciators not only at home, but among critical foreign observers, should gratify his countrymen, for we may all share the reward. The group of poems which the New Republic is now publishing at intervals of two weeks is the first extended work of Frost's to appear in almost two years. He is never in haste and he does not need to be. He is sure and so are his admiring readers, for he brings up the true gold from beneath the appearance of things.

ON the technical aspects of the Fall-Doheny case the New Republic will comment at length in the near future. In the meantime we need only say that the outcome, while in our judgment regrettable, need not surprise anyone familiar with the circumstances. The case on which a Washington jury was asked to pass was one in which the defendants were charged with conspiracy, always a difficult thing to prove; the bribery charge against the same defendants is still pending. The trial came more than four years after the acts complained of, a situation which usually operates to the advantage of the defendant. It is arguable that the jury may have shown a conscientious distinction between a "moral certainty" of conspiracy and conclusive legal proof of the same. They may also have been unconsciously influenced by the fact that one of the defendants is both a multi-millionaire and a man whose personality is to the highest degree powerful and persuasive. Finally, they had to consider that whereas one branch of the government, represented in the prosecution, attacked the Elk Hills lease as fraudulent, another, represented in the Navy Department, defended it. Admiral Robison took the stand and used the bogey of war with Japan to justify the transaction, despite the fact that the contract was signed in the spring of 1922, just after the close of the Washington conference, when the tension between America and Japan was less than at any time for a generation. Secretary Wilbur—who was for many years an inconspicuous citizen of Los Angeles, a town which Mr. Doheny dominated then as now—took the stand and confirmed the Admiral. Patriotism was invoked. The flag was waved. Such powerful pressure was created that it would be a miracle if any twelve citizens of Washington, selected at random, could withstand it.

THE adverse decision of this jury does not mean that the government is at the end of its resources. In the civil suit based on the same set of facts, the Federal Court of Los Angeles held a year and a half ago that the lease was made "in fraud and conspiracy." This decision was upheld by the Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco and the

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case is now pending before the United States Supreme Court. In the similar civil suit against the Sinclair interests to break the Teapot Dome lease, the decision of the Federal District Court of Wyoming against the government was reversed by the Circuit Court of Appeals of St. Louis and this case is also pending in the Supreme Court. Next month begins the trial of Fall and Sinclair for conspiracy, in which the allegation will be made that Fall received $230,500 in Liberty bonds from Sinclair. Decidedly, the books are not yet closed on this episode in our history.

IT IS supposed to be a great triumph for Poincaré that he secured the passage of the budget for 1927 before the beginning of the new year instead of having to wait until several months of it had passed, as has recently been the custom in France. Whether promptitude alone will be of any lasting benefit, however, remains to be seen. France is now suffering in the pincers between a rising exchange value of the franc, which discourages exports and brings depression to industry, and a rising internal price level, which increases the burdens of large sections of the population. With such incalculable factors it is a question whether any budget balanced on paper in December will stay balanced in fact until June. Tax yields may tend to rise on account of higher prices, but this tendency is likely to be overborne by the slackness of business activity. Meanwhile the current expenses of the government increase. In the depression of 1921 France went through a similar period, in which it was said that all troubles of the franc were over, yet nothing permanent was achieved and subsequent inflation was worse than ever.

IF we look at the stock dividends, the extra cash dividends and the profit records of business concerns, it appears that extraordinary prosperity is with us. These profits, however, reflect results of the past months rather than the present condition. Another picture is presented by the bank clearings, which show from week to week in what volume check payments are being made and hence what is the state of trade. Beginning with October, bank clearings have steadily run less than last year at the same time. A decline in bank clearings is sometimes explained by weakness of the stock market, and is embodied merely in the New York City figures. These, however, for the week ending December 16, showed a fall of 8 percent against a fall of 8.8 percent for the rest of the country. Or the decline might be due merely to lower prices for specific agricultural products such as wheat or cotton. It is true that the largest reductions are shown in Minneapolis, Richmond and Atlanta—25.1, 23.2 and 35.6 percent respectively. This is a serious enough matter. But Philadelphia dropped 15.8 percent, Seattle 15.3 percent, Chicago and Detroit 10.8 percent. In fact only two out of twenty-three reporting cities showed gains—Boston and Los Angeles.

They Want to Know

Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe, if you found out how to live in it, you learned from that what it was all about.—*Ernest Hemingway, in The Sun Also Rises.*

FOR the most part human beings have, of course, cared enormously what it was all about. Without a certified plan of the universe and of their personal relation to it, they did not see how they could live in it loyally and adequately. This certified plan is what they have ordinarily meant by religion. Recently the newspapers have circulated a "religious" questionnaire which dealt entirely with beliefs about God, immortality and prayer and with specific acts such as church-going. People who admitted such beliefs and who went to church were classified as religious. People who did not were classified as irreligious. The test was supposed to divide the sheep from the goats. Yet the sophisticated youth of today and many of their elders reject it. Religion concerns truth, but first of all it concerns life. We are not born with any knowledge which equips us to live adequately and truthfully in the world—to synthesize truth with life. Our regular education has not repaired the deficiency. Particularly in its higher forms it has subordinated life to achieved truth. It is our first business as human beings to find out how to live. It must be done by personal experiments in living. The people who believe in God and immortality and practice church-going and prayer are not of much help in this respect. Their religion is mixed up with verbal illusions and moral scruples or pretensions which disqualify its devotees from trusting themselves to life and profiting from the experience. Religious education from their point of view is much more a matter of instruction and exhortation than of individual initiative and discovery. The brethren have to choose between belonging either to the shepherds or to the sheep.

Hard-boiled youth are justified in rejecting a religion of opinion or of conventional conduct. The bank whose checks religious tradition is still asking human credulity to cash is bankrupt. It was a venerable institution, and many pious people still honor its paper. Yet its remaining assets are not sufficient to meet its increasing liabilities. The elders founded it early in recorded history when, as a way out of their perplexities, they jumped at a few bristling conclusions about the nature of the universe. These conclusions proved to be useful. Life was in those days an extremely chancy affair. It was not safe to travel except on highways whose signposts furnished directions chiefly in the form of warnings. The lack of common religious convictions imperiled moral and social order. In order to discourage dissent—equivalent in their minds both to aberration and dissension—the elders gradually built a temple

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of divine authority whose treasures would form the perennial source of absolute certification. This structure of authority presented a different façade to the world at different times, but its assets were always composed of the same kind of yellow metal. The present generation conspired to terrify the next generation into conformity of belief. Disaster would overtake the disbelieving sinners. They might be burned alive in this world. Or their dead bodies and living spirits might be burned in the next world for thousands of years. Or they might be cast out into the wilderness and deprived of rights which good people would have any reason to respect. They could not escape. Even though they were not punished for levity or disorder before they died, they would in the end cut themselves off from salvation.

Since the Reformation and the rise of modern science, many circumstances have combined to impair the credit of this institution. Although the new sectarian churches issued more bills than the church universal, the denominations were smaller, and they were more easily counterfeited. They circulated only at a tacitly acknowledged discount. By the end of the nineteenth century many rumors of its insolvency were being passed around, but not until after the War was the alarming news broadcast by the papers. Radical scepticism, unaccompanied by any sense of sin, foreboding of punishment or conscious surrender of salvation, is now a widely diffused and aggressive social microbe. The elders can do nothing to immunize society against its ravages. The Christian churches by attaching the same pretensions to disputed dogmas as their predecessors did to undisputed dogmas have themselves undermined the authority of authority. The state has contributed to the downfall by refusing to take religious scruples seriously. The progress of natural science has completed the bankruptcy of dogma by satisfying the craving for truth without falling back except incidentally on authority. But this new science does not take the place of the old. It is interpreted both as the inveterate enemy and the indispensable ally of religious faith. The improved description of natural processes is admitted to be the most trustworthy form of existing knowledge, but whenever young people inquire what in the light of this science the world is all about, and how they can best live in it, the answers are contradictory and impoverished. If the confused wayfarer turns inward and prays for trustworthy guidance, he may meet his most disheartening defeat. The still small voice which has presided over the conduct of so many pious and benevolent souls is being hushed. It no longer speaks with its former assurance. The young learn from books and newspapers that their infirmities, their self-deceptions and their defeats no less than their moral aspiration speak through the inner voice. Conscience or duty, once the stern daughter of the voice of God, is now more often reported to be a hand-pumped organ for the sublimation of personal and cosmic worry.

Assuming then that young people wake up to find themselves in a world without a plan and without authoritative instruction, how do they propose to get their bearings? At present, so far as we can see, they do not bother much about it. They are quite content to eat and drink, swear and sing, work and love and now and then pretend to be sorry for themselves. Yet without any relapse towards subordination to doubtful authority, they can try another route. Scepticism cannot rob them of life itself and their animal faith in life. Perhaps, as Mr. Hemingway says, they can learn by living. They are not sure that they can learn by living, but they feel sure that they cannot learn without living. The only way to find out is to try to behave as if they are able to live and learn. Their scepticism, instead of being a handicap to the acquisition of this experimental knowledge, is transformed into a preparation and a stimulus. Their elders, who began by learning the sacred truths and then lived by the alleged light, were predisposed to distrust life and to fool themselves about some of its unmanageable aspects. But the only chance which sceptical youth has of finding its bearings is to trust life, to live honestly, freely and thoroughly, but at the same time inquisitively. The truth which authority cannot impose upon life must be wrung from life itself by the help of an exploratory habit of mind which they will bring to the process of living.

The growth of their religious insight will depend upon the exercise in conjunction with living of a disinterested, inveterate and impassioned curiosity. By assiduously spraying such curiosity upon every moment of their experience, they may hold it up long enough to extract its secret and divide some of its invisible contents. They will not discover the clue to life by investigating the universe at large and writing their own encyclopædias. But they may learn something about the universe, which the Encyclopædia Britannica omits, by cultivating the exploration of their own behavior. They are alive; they are individuals or selves of some kind; and they are conscious. Truth is a function of consciousness. To know how to live they must be conscious of themselves. Perhaps if they substitute for an unwary animal faith in life a methodical attempt to become aware of their own special contacts, their own special biography and their own special promise as individuals, they may move towards the desired synthesis of life with truth.

This proposed method of conscious self-exploration will immediately encounter one formidable objection. It will be accused of being merely a disingenuous attempt to revive the barren and discarded practice of puritan introspection. The objection is plausible. There is an analogy between the puritan efforts to obtain self-knowledge by a process of conscious self-purgation and the proposed transformation of the good life into methodical self-exploration and self-inquisition. But there

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is also a difference. Unlike puritan introspection, the new method would consciously protect its operations against deception. The puritan of old was incapable of objectifying his inquiries into his natural life. He had already accepted conclusions about it which had closed his mind. He conceived his nature as unregenerate. It could only become regenerate by the grace of God. There was nothing which he could do to liberate it. He could subject it to discipline, and he could be on his guard against it. But it was what it was, and he had nothing to gain by being inquisitive and watchful about its behavior. This conclusion vitiated his method of self-inquisition. Instead of emancipating his possible better self from the limitations of his existing personality, he barred the way to such emancipation. In this respect both the puritan and the ordinary automatic sleepy individual commit the same mistake. They allow their imaginative picture of themselves to be determined by what they already are or seem to themselves to be. They hypnotize themselves into inertia and self-satisfaction. Their conscious attitude towards themselves presupposes that their possibilities of growth are limited by the merely accidental limitations of their existing personality. The indispensable condition of the successful practice of the kind of curiosity about oneself which may help the practitioner to learn by living is the utter refusal on his part to permit any identification between the desirable and possible reality of his own life and the collective facts of his prevailing behavior.

Hard-boiled youth have thrown overboard the old conclusions about the world with comparative ease. But if they really try to dispense with conclusions about themselves, they will have undertaken a task which will occupy all their vigilance, all their courage and all their energy. For every act, every feeling and every thought in which they indulge without exercising a lively curiosity about what it is and how it reverberates will inevitably seek to compensate for its partiality and its subjectivity by pretending to be conclusive. The ordinary personality is in fact a bundle of uneasy and half-baked conclusions about itself. The young people who really want to know must begin by plunging a sword into their individual collection of plausible pretexts for self-satisfaction. The most paralyzing and the most ignoble, but at the same time the most seductive conclusion of all human beings, disappears in the maze of their existing personality. Jesus probably referred to the need of being rough and ruthless to ourselves when he said that he brought not peace, but the sword. Systematic self-surgery opens up the only chance of synthesizing individual life with truth, the only chance of finding out about the world by equipping ourselves to live in it. Of course human relations help, and the arts help. But the art of living by the light of truth is one which the individual must practice for himself and by a technique all his own. The beginning of it is the appeal to a methodical curiosity to rescue his moral imagination from its bondage to that poor fragment of his potentialities which is already actualized.

The Steel Melon—a Comment on Saving

BECAUSE the United States Steel Corporation is both the largest and the leading American industrial organization, its declaration of a 40 per-cent stock dividend prompts reflections which are pertinent to industry in general.

We are told in elementary economics that the rewards received and the control exercised by the owners of industry are necessary to stimulate the accumulation of capital and hence the salutary increase of production. A man, foregoing certain present expenditures, endures sacrifice and saves money. This money he invests. The investment is used to create new productive equipment. The return he may receive compensates him for his saving and sacrifice, as well as for the risk he takes in making his savings available to the public use. Without such return savings would not be made, and the public would suffer. How does this theory apply to the creation and growth of the United States Steel Corporation?

When the Corporation was formed in 1901, the owners of the companies which were to be subsidiaries turned in securities with a par value of $881,720,994. The cash investment in these concerns had been considerably less than this, but for purposes of simplicity let us ignore former inflation of value and take the figure as a starting point. In exchange for these securities the new merger paid the owners preferred stock and bonds with a par value of $748,748,611. This left a margin of but $42,972,383 to be supplied by issues whose value was more speculative. To fill the margin the new U. S. Steel gave the old owners common stock with a par value of $443,398,092. If the old owners had not wanted to take any speculative chances whatever on this stock they would have had to sell at only a little less than $10 a share to come out even. As a matter of fact they could have sold it, on the day the stock was first traded in on the exchange, for $43.75. The average price for the first year was about $40. Here was an immediate profit of some $30 a share if they wanted to cash in. For only a brief period in one year did the stock ever go below $10, and it has long since risen to par and far above. But in order to exclude the speculative chances altogether, let us say that the formation of the merger immediately netted the original owners what they could have sold their common stock for during the first year, or about $177,300,000.

In addition, the promoters of the merger had some U. S. Steel securities left over to sell to the public or to keep, as they pleased. Let us reckon

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their non-speculative gains by supposing that they sold them all to the public at once. They had preferred shares with a par value of about $65,000,000, which sold above par at times during 1901, but had an average market value of about $89. This gave them, let us say, $58,400,000. They also had common shares with a par value of about $165,000,000, which if sold at $40 would have brought them about $66,000,000.

Adding together the immediate gains of the subsidiary owners and the promoters, we find an almost instantaneous jump in market value amounting to $301,700,000. This did not represent cash or tangible assets of any kind put into the concern. It represented merely the contemporaneous market estimate of new value offered by the prospect of future profits under the merger. If we mean by watered stock, stock which represents something besides the cost of plant and equipment, it was pure water. The consumer was expected in the future to pay sufficiently higher prices for steel to produce the earnings essential to sustain this value.

Were such expectations dissappointed? Hardly. Let us now follow the fortunes of an investor who paid $40 in 1901 for a share of U. S. Steel Common. And in passing, let us note that his $40 did not pay for a single ounce of new plant or mechanical equipment. It was not an "investment" in that economic sense. It simply paid a profit to the owners or organizers of U. S. Steel. If he has held the stock to this day, he has received in cash dividends 131¼ percent of its par value, or the $40 which he paid for it plus $91.25. The average annual yield on his investment has been over 13 percent. He now finds himself possessed of one and two-fifths shares for every share he held in the first place, with a market value of about $160. If he wants to sell, he can retire from his speculation with a net gain of $120 in capital, not to speak of the $131.25 which he has received in cash dividends. Or he can hold the stock with prospect of receiving in future cash dividends of $9.80 per year, or 24.5 percent on his original investment. All this on the basis of a cash sacrifice which in itself did not add a single item to the physical capital equipment of the nation.

The story can be summed up in another way. The aggregate net profits of the corporation since its formation to the close of 1925, available for dividends, were $2,185,712,403. Of these, $1,279,253,785 had by that time been distributed to holders of preferred and common stock. The common alone, which represented virtually no physical investment or cash sacrifice, had received $631,544,001. There remained $906,458,618 above the dividends. Of this, $409,595,500 was appropriated for capital expenditures and special charges—extension of plant and equipment—leaving a profit and loss surplus of $496,863,100, in addition to the $25,000,000 surplus at the date of organization. The present value of the common stock is derived entirely from these profits—the amount paid in dividends, the amount plowed back into the concern, the amount left in the surplus.

It is noteworthy that since its organization U. S. Steel has made its tremendous expansion of plant without the aid of any additional cash invested by the public in the form of the sale of new securities. Not only the reinvestment of surplus noted above has been used for expansion, but other large appropriations made before the annual profits were reckoned. Its total capital expenditures since its organization have been about $1,500,000,000. It now owns 138 manufacturing plants, 112 blast furnaces, 34 Bessemer converters, 332 steel furnaces, 3,284 by-product coke ovens, 13,306 bee-hive coke ovens, 3,862 miles of railroad trackage, 1,464 locomotives and 64,705 cars, over 260 steamers and barges, iron and other metal mines, timber lands, coal mines, oil and gas wells and land, etc., etc. All built up, since 1901, out of what the public paid for steel, not out of what investors "saved."

Shall we not have to reconsider our views of saving, our definition and justification of capital accumulation? Is it reasonable to say that investors in U. S. Steel are solely responsible for and should solely profit from and control this great industrial aggregation? Surely the public and labor have a right to a voice in its administration. For its control of wages and of prices, intangible though that control may be, and legal though it may be under the anti-trust laws, lies at the very basis of the structure. We are not concerned here with the process of organizing labor's or consumers' voice, or with its probable effect. Those who justify the present order will say that the existing control is responsible for the efficiency of the steel company. Yet it is possible that wages might with benefit have been higher, that prices might with benefit have been lower, that the power of the steel magnates on public affairs is too great to be salutary, or that the surplus might in part have been used to the greater advantage of the community. Certainly it is impossible to say that such great rewards as have come to owners of steel common are necessary to stimulate the accumulation of capital or the extension of productive equipment.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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The Confessions of an Economist

A LEARNED friend who has lived in China tells me that these subtle and polite people have no word for economist that signifies anything like our own, so that when they print an article of mine describing American economic conditions they designate my profession and magnify my authority by an ideograph which means literally "philosopher of material things." This is charming, to be sure, but for me the velvety sarcasm in this suave description has only made more insistent the still, small voice that asks just what and why I, as an economist, am anyway. If "philosopher," in the prevalent pragmatic American sense, means one who takes things as they are, and as much as possible of them, the Chinese definition may be conceded a half-truth. But if the philosophy in it implies any measure of evaluation or revaluation of material things in terms of life, any quality of creative criticism or prophecy, then it must be taken as a Chinese joke.

Despite the oriental effort to save our face, in our sincere moments, when we ourselves are not under the spell of the complacent deceptions of our trade, we know and derive no small compensation from the knowledge that as economists we may count ourselves today not only among, but in a sense the archetype of all those professional "philosophers" who wander like wraiths between two worlds, the one dead or dying, the other powerless to be born. And our tragedy and its solace lie in the fact that, though the spotlight of popular expectancy has been turned full upon us since the War, we know we are powerless to aid in the accouchement of any new world, or even to say confidently what, if any, is being or should be born. Indeed, we are rather inclined to suspect that the apocalyptic parturition that has been prophesied is probably a false alarm. At any rate, we hope so, for we know full well that somehow our body of scientific knowledge, our system of belief and our stock of practical wisdom have lost their roots in the life of our time and have withered into a tangle of dry and feeble formulas and phrases, quite inadequate for the impending Utopia.

Nor is this self-realization the worst. We know that our real force has evaporated because we have wandered, or been seduced, like Peer Gynt, into a desert where all economic and social doctrine have gradually conformed in their optimism to the eternally cloudless skies, in their social fatalism to the endless undulations of the shifting sands, and in their principle of progress to the periodic peace and prosperity of the occasional oasis. In the chaotic caravans that cross this Sahara in search of an easy and everlasting Cathay, we economists have become the mendicant Kalenders, soothing the uncertainties of the merchant princes with statistical snake-charmers and diverting them from doubt and depression with the whirling dervish dances of industrial "dope."

The carpe diem cynicism of the sincere economist in this time has arisen inevitably and almost unconsciously. It is, as I see it in myself, partly the result of a realization of the remoteness of our scientific lore from the apparent life of today, and partly a consequence of the strength of the temptations that have been offered to seduce us from the detachment of scholarship and the solitary search for truth. After some fifteen years of teaching economics, writing and lecturing on economic subjects for the general public, editing economic literature, directing and carrying on research for practical purposes, seeking to bring into our business and industrial organization something of economic rationality as it has come down to us from the patriarchs of political economy, I have to confess to a profound sense of futility and scepticism regarding the cogency or certainty of most of our economic doctrine in face of the protean and fluid reality of our current economic life.

It is not that any particular principles in the body of doctrine have flatly been given the lie by the facts. It would be a blessing if this were so, and if one could definitely amputate, say, a part of the classical theory of value, or any of the numerous theories of wages and interest, and forget them or preserve them only as archæological specimens in the academic museums which our collegiate economic departments have so largely become since the skyscraping schools of business administration and commerce have risen on our campuses. Rather is it characteristic of the position of the economist today that not only is there no longer any consistent body of principles to which he can dogmatically subscribe if he wishes, but they all seem equally irrelevant because they all seem equally true. As is the fate of all dead truth, the facts do not refute, but rather ignore them. Anything, from the price of stocks to the salaries of advertising executives, may be explained by them, for it does not appear to matter in practice what they prove or assert by way of truth, or suggest by way of policy. There is little left for economics to supply but the echo of the tune to which we all dance and for which most of us pay the piper through the nose.

This is so, I feel, because economic life has so clearly won the upper hand. It has become so nearly all of life today, and life proves everything and obeys nothing. In an age when economic motives and behavior could be more or less clearly segregated because life was much else, it was possible to formulate a body of economic doctrine of some definiteness and pertinency, applicable with some success to the material aspects of human af-

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fairs. But when economic motives have so penetrated and been infused into all behavior as they are today, when economic activity indeed has become the essential form of life, economics is faced with the necessity of explaining everything and so can explain nothing.

To realize this concretely you have only to ask a few economists for an opinion on the economic significance of such a current economic phenomenon as instalment buying, for instance. An honest one will tell you he doesn't know, that it doesn't matter whether it is economically "sound" or not, that the important thing is why it has taken place, and that this is a question that has its roots in our whole contemporaneous culture and one on which economic theory alone can throw little light. The rest will prove from statistics of wages, prices, production and credit, or from abstract computation, that it is sound or that it isn't, and from the moral maxims of Massachusetts or the laissez-faire philosophy of Florida that it is good or bad, and you can take your choice as safely on geographical as on scientific grounds. So, too, there is not an economist in a hundred who can claim any honest understanding of, or who, understanding, dares to question, those principles of prestidigitation that constitute the financial system of the time and that are perhaps the core of our current economic life.

The failure of economics to take fuller account of the whole range of individual and social motives which are now actually embraced in it, though they were not in the Kircaldy or Glasgow of Adam Smith, and its persistent pretense of regarding itself as some sort of natural or physical science, a kind of engineering system by which some superior mentality called "management" manipulates money, men, materials and machines according to some body of preëstablished principles—all this is not peculiar to it. It is characteristic of all the sciences which had their roots in and formed the basis of the mechanistic century, the age of physical conquest that is passing. But the economist much less than others has been touched by the creative point of view; the dogma of causal relation and the spell of mechanistic repetition dominate him to a greater degree today than they do even the physicist, and certainly much more than the biologist, psychologist or sociologist.

The futility of the economist today is due essentially to the fact that there is in us neither the power nor in this period the time to make that intellectual and spiritual synthesis which is necessary to give validity and force to knowledge and experience and to enable it to serve as an effective guide and faith by reason of the real responsibility which attaches to it. This it was that, in its way, gave the pre-war body of economic doctrine its vitality. This was the economics of a machine era which looked no further than the solution of the technological problem of production, an economics in which problems of industrial relations and motives were regarded only as part of the mechanics of management, and in which the problems of distribution and consumption or utilization figured hardly at all. It was the science of blind productivity, the rationale of endless acquisition, the outcome of a century of cultivation and ten years of final synthesis of the mechanistic philosophy which dominated every field of thought from international policy to private pleasure. Under the force majeure of the War, which abolished the problem of the market and made that of industrial relations at most a political one, this economic system reached its fulfillment. It taught how to turn out the goods and the way to make men work. What, why and what of it, it never asked.

But the powerful organization of economic appetites that it created and that has gripped the world in consequence of it is facing quite new and other problems than that of production. It has grown itself a stomach of unlimited capacity, but its total blindness and its rudimentary circulatory system and nervous organization predispose it to recurrent fits of indigestion, gout, elephantiasis, locomotor ataxia, or what not, parallels pathology presents to political economy. The question it puts to the economist, and to everyone else, is no longer, as before and during the War, "how to get it," but "what to do with it now that you've got it."

It is altogether natural that the economic science and political philosophy that generated this amœbic monstrosity should, when carried over into this new stage of economic evolution, become a religious system, and its economists, as they feel themselves increasingly impotent, become a priesthood, with a hierarchy ranging from the pontifical Hoovers who issue bulls against depression down to the Fra Rogerses who carry the gospel of periodic prosperity to the aboriginal Kiwanis, converting the wisdom of Wellesley Hills into cash in the coffers of Oshkosh. In an occasional Veblen or Foster-and-Catchings, to be sure, this vast economic ecclesiasticism has roused its academic Jeremiahs or its lay Luthers, but they have usually soon sunk into silence under the force of excommunication, condemned by the cardinals of the colleges of commerce under the jesuitical exegesis of the gospel of supply and demand.

This restless, unstable system of snatch and scramble demands of us only a service of consolation and catharsis, and we resign ourselves to it as the harassed medic does to his perfunctory prescriptions of calomel and cascara. In its anxious insecurity our industrial infantilism cries for its statistical soothing syrup as the kids are supposed to cry for Castoria. An age that has ignored or sacrificed the creative spirit of life for a mechanistic science inevitably seeks its sole religion, refuge and reassurance in the abstraction of number and is driven to deify the Index. Only what can be counted can be counted upon, and it is the statistics of the swallows that fall that certify the existence of God.

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Heaven becomes a cosmic census bureau, the Almighty the Chief Statistician, and we economists are his prophets who interpret the tables of the law of supply and demand. Since all our economic exegesis still fails to solace the business psyche in its insecurity, it has asked us for a sign, and we have given it the business cycle which moves in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

Nor does our service here cease. Since words are of supreme importance when there is nothing to do, we have become the scribes, the orators, rhetoricians, logographoi and minnesingers of the commercial court circles, illuminating the missals of "management," laboriously lettering the lives of the successful industrial saints, emblazoning the beatitudes of business, embellishing the epic of efficiency, chanting the canticles of commerce and tuning the trumpets for the troubadours of trade, at the conventions and conferences that are the tournaments and jousts of this age of commercial chivalry.

All this, of course, has ended the scholastic isolation and the academic asceticism which were once our pride and ridicule. The schools of business have installed the cash register on the campus and put the ledger in the library. The radiance of the golden wheel of Rotary has penetrated the contemplative shadows of the academic cloister. No longer do we burn dim, distant candles before the shrine of science, but we now manipulate the mazdas in the magic lantern of merchandising. Instead of fingering the philosophic flute we sway the seductive saxophone in the jazz band of big business.

But in this, whatever we have profited in professional prosperity we have paid in prestige. Our calling has ceased to be a science or a culture and has become at best an art and at worst an occupation in which the field is as free and as honest as chiropractic, prohibition enforcement and palmistry. It is neither accident nor knavery that a leading business magazine publishes monthly market forecasts by an astrologer, for the signs of the zodiac and the oscillations of the business cycle are sisters under their statistical skins. Sumner used to say, in the day when economics could pretend to be an ordered system of esoteric truth, that it could never win any distinction because the man in the street who had to have a veterinary to physic his horse had no hesitation about being his own economist even though he starved from it. Today we complain not, for there is no answer to the sidewalk economist. He knows as much about it all as we do. The only difference is that the man in the street has become the man in the Street, and like honest soothsayers we know that what he thinks is certainly so and what he wants is bound to be true.

(This is the eleventh in a series of anonymous confessions, in which men and women in various walks of life are giving their professional or spiritual autobiographies.)

Once by the Pacific

The shattered water made a misty din,
Great waves looked over others coming in,
And thought of doing something to the shore
That water never did to land before.
The clouds were low and hairy in the skies
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
The sand was lucky in being backed by cliff,
The cliff in being backed by continent.
It looked as if a night of dark intent
Was coming, and not only a night, an age.
Someone had better be prepared for rage.
There would be more than ocean water broken
Before God's last *Put out the light* was spoken.

ROBERT FROST.

Shepherding

Who is more tender than a shepherd is,
The intimacy of weathers in his face?
A fold, a serviceable staff is his:
Out in the park or some like country place,
Have I not seen one, in a golden air,
On golden road, driving his flock before,
A figure tall, hereditary, spare,
And longed to follow to that kindly door?
It must be that some rich, forgotten thing
Chokes at the heart at sight of these who pass;
Lost dreams gather about us in the grass;
And when this happens, for a moment we fling
Our gold down, as it were but hoarded glass,
And run back to our ancient shepherding.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESR.

Ownership

Love not a loveliness too much,
For it may turn and clutch you so,
That you be less than any serf,
And at its nodding go.

Be master; otherwise you grow
Too small, too humble, like to one
Long dispossessed, who stares through tears
At his lost house across the sun.

Wild carrot in an old field here,
Or steeple choked with music there,
Possess, as part of what is yours;
Thus prove yourself the heir.

Your barony is sky and land,
From morning's start to the night's close;
Bend to your need Orion's hounds,
Or the small fagot of a rose.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

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"Genius"

"GENIUS," cried Haydon, darting at his canvas like a lion after some temporary rebuff, "Genius is sent into the world not to obey laws, but to give them!" For of course Haydon was a genius. Genius is written large all over his memoirs. But it is genius of a particular kind. It is not the Shakespearean but the Victorian genius, not the unconscious, but the conscious, not the true but—let us pause, however, and read Haydon's autobiography (now reprinted with a brilliant introduction by Mr. Huxley) before we decide what kind of genius his was. That it was violent in its symptoms and remorseless in its severity is evident. Of all those men and women who have been stricken with genius—and the number in the British Isles must be great—none suffered more, or was more terribly its victim than the inspired boy with weak eyes who should have been a bookseller in his father's shop in Plymouth but heard himself summoned to go to London, to be a great painter, to honor his country, and to "rescue the Art from that stigma of incapacity which was impressed on it."

He came to London. He made friends with Wilkie. He lived and painted in one room, and there, night after night, Wilkie, Du Fresne, Doctor Millingen, McClaggan, Allan ("the celebrated painter") and Callender all met and drank his good tea out of his large cups and argued about art and politics and divinity and medicine and how Marie Antoinette's head was cut off (Du Fresne said he had been present and had flung his red cap into the air) while Liz of Rathbone Place, who loved their talk but was otherwise cold, sided with one, attacked another, and was found studying Reid on the Human Mind "with an expression of profound bewilderment." "Happy period!" Haydon burst out, "no servants—no responsibilities—reputation on the bud—ambition beginning, friends untried"; and so things might have gone on had it not been for the demon which possessed him—the devil which made him, even in those early days, indite letters, which Liz applauded, against the might of the Royal Academy, and vow to bring about their humiliation and the triumph of High Art by vast pictures of Dentatus and Macbeth and Solomon which took months to paint, filled his living room with the reek of oil, required that he should dissect the forequarters of an ass and go without meat and run into debt, for, as he soon found out, "the expenses of a work of High Art in England are dreadful."

But there was another consequence of his prepossession. High Art being of necessity large art into the bargain only the great nobles could afford it, and in consequence the simple life with Liz and big cups of tea was abandoned for the life, or at least the dinner tables, of the Mulgraves and the Beaumonts and any other Lord or Lady who could be hypnotized into the belief that it was their wish to have a vast picture of Achilles in the drawing room, and to their credit to have a man of genius talking very loud and very big at their board. Haydon, rapt in his burning enthusiasm for the heroic, for the Elgin Marbles and for himself, took it all seriously. He entertained fashion all day long. Instead of painting, "I walked about my room, looked into the glass, anticipated what the foreign ambassadors would say," and seriously believed, when the beauties put up their eyeglasses and lisped their admiration, that his fortune was made and that "all the sovereigns of Europe would hail with delight an English youth who could paint an heroic picture."

But he was disillusioned. The great, he found, care not for art, but for what people say about pictures. "Dear Lord Mulgrave" lost his faith in Dentatus when he heard it criticized. Sir George Beaumont shillied and shallied and said at last that Macbeth was too big and Lady Beaumont had no room for it and, "in fact Sir George was tired, and wanted another extraordinary young man, for Wilkie was an old story, and I was a nuisance." "And so, artists," he concluded, summing up all that he had suffered from his patrons, but letting us infer too how boldly he had corrected them and how terribly he had bored them: "And so, Artists, be humble and discreet!"

He proved the wisdom of his own saying by marrying, in spite of his debts, a widow with two children, and by having, in quick succession, six more children of his own. With all this weight upon his shoulders he sank steadily more and more deeply into the mud. For his genius never deserted him. It was always flourishing irresistible subjects before his eyes. He was always rushing at his canvas and "rubbing in" the head of Alexander "gloriously" or dashing off some gigantic group of warriors and lions when his room was bare of furniture, his wife screaming in childbirth, and the baby (it was a way they had) dying in the cradle. Where a smaller man would have found his private difficulties enough, Haydon took upon himself the cares of the world. He was passionately interested in politics, in the Reform bill, in the Trades Union movement, in the success of the British arms. Above all, he was the champion of High Art in England. He must badger Wellington, Peel and every minister in turn to employ young English painters to decorate Westminster Hall and the Houses of Parliament. Nor could he let the Royal Academy sleep in peace. His friends begged him to stop: but no. "The idea of being a Luther or a John Knox in art got the better of my reason. . . . I attacked the Acad-

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emy," with the result that "I had brought forty men and all their high connections on my back at twenty-six years old, and there was nothing left but Victory or Westminster Abbey. I made up my mind for the conflict, and ordered at once a larger canvas for another work."

But on the road to Victory and Westminster Abbey lay a more sordid lodging house, through which Haydon passed four times—the Kings Bench prison. Servants and children, he noted, became familiar with the signs of an approaching execution. He himself learnt how to pawn and how to buttonhole, how to flatter the sheriff's officer, how to bombard the great (who were certainly generous if they were not clever), how to wring the hearts of landlords, whose humanity was extraordinary; but one thing he could not do—deny the demands of his own genius. Portrait painting was an obvious resource. But then how odious to paint a little private individual, a mere Mayor, or Member of Parliament, when one's head was swarming with Solomons and Jerusalems and Pharaohs and Crucifixions and Macbeths! He could scarcely bring himself to do it. One could make them larger than life, it is true, but then the critics sneered, and said that if the ex-Mayor was the size that Haydon painted him he must have stuck in the doorway. It was paltry work. "The trash that one is obliged to talk! The stuff that one is obliged to copy! The fidgets that are obliged to be borne! My God! . . ."

The name of God was often on his lips. He was on terms of cordial intimacy with the Deity. He could not believe that one great spirit could consent to the downfall of another. God and Napoleon and Nelson and Wellington and Haydon were all of the same calibre, all in the grand style. His mind harped on these great names constantly. And, indeed, though poor Mrs. Haydon would smile when he bade her "trust in God" his trust was often justified. He left his house in the morning with the children fighting, with Mary scolding, with no water in the cistern, to trudge all day from patron to pawn shop, and come home at night "tired, croaking, grumbling and muddy" when, just as hope seemed extinct, a letter arrived; it was from Lord Grey; it contained a check. Once more they were saved.

With it all, he declared, he was a very happy man, pink and plump, in spite of all his worries, when Wilkie, who led an abstemious bachelor's life, was cadaverous and plaintive. Now and again they took the children to the sea, or snatched an afternoon in Kensington Gardens, and if they were in the depths of despair on Wednesday, as likely as not some stroke of fortune would put them into the seventh Heaven on Thursday. Then there were his friends—Keats and Lamb and Wordsworth and Scott—and his walks and his arguments and his supper parties with them. He had above all a mind which was forever tossing and tumbling, like a vigorous and active dolphin, in the seas of thought. "I never feel alone," he wrote. "With visions of ancient heroes, pictures of Christ, principles of Ancient Art, humorous subjects, deductions, sarcasms against the Academy, piercing remembrances of my dear children crowding upon me, I paint, I write, conceive, fall asleep . . . my mortality at being fatigued." The power which drove him to these extremities did at least reward him with some of its delights.

But as the symptoms of inspiration multiply—this passionate joy in creation, this conviction of a divine mission—one asks oneself what then is false, for falsity there certainly seems to be. First there is something in the superabundance of protest, in the violence of inspiration, which rouses suspicion; next these vast pictures of crowds, armies, heroes, raptures, agonies, begin even as he sketches them in words to wound our eyes with their floridity, their rhetoric; and finally we catch ourselves thinking, as some felicity of phrase flashes out, or some pose or arrangement makes its effect, that his genius is a writer's. He should have held a pen, not a brush. Of all painters, surely he was the best read. "The truth is I am fonder of books than of anything else on earth," he wrote. He clung to his Shakespeare and his Homer when his lay figure had to go to the pawnbroker. There was even one moment when he doubted his own vocation and accused the sublime art of hampering his powers. His instinct to express himself in words was undeniable. Overworked as he was, he always found time to write a diary which is in no way perfunctory but follows with ease and sinuosity the ins and outs of his life. Phrases form naturally at the tip of his pen. "He sat and talked easily, lazily, gazing at the sun with his legs crossed," he says of Chantrey. "Poor fellow," he wrote, on hearing that Wilkie was buried at sea, "I wonder what the fish think of him, with their large glassy eyes in the gurgling deep." Always his painter's eye lights up his phrase, and scenes which must have been offensive in paint shape themselves naturally and rightly in words. If only his genius, when it descended from the heaven, had rubbed its eyes and seen what it was about!

But if it had bungled, his genius was unrelenting. Paint he must; paint he did. The whole world turned against his painting in the end. His cartoons were rejected; the public went to see Tom Thumb and left his last exhibition deserted; he could only struggle along by tossing off pictures of Napoleon Musing at the rate of one in two hours and a half. Even his prayers now come to sound a little hoarse and his protests without conviction. He darted, it is true, at another canvas, finished the Saxon Lord, dashed in Alfred, and "worked," he declared, "gloriously." But one morning, the strain overcame him. He blew his brains out. They found him dead before his easel, and Alfred and the First British Jury was sprinkled with his blood. So genius had claimed her victim. And if we seek now any relic of

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all those acres of canvas, those crowds of heroes, those troops of lions and tigers, we find clean white walls, people comfortably dining, and a vague rumor that a big picture did once hang here, but the management took it away when the place was done up. All is gone; Allan "the celebrated painter," Du Fresne, who saw Marie Antoinette executed; Millingen, Liz of Rathbone Place, canvases beyond count; but still the pages that he scribbled without thought of Genius or Art or Posterity remain holding vividly before our eyes the struggling, greedy life with all its black smoke and its flame.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

Washington Notes

PERSONALLY I don't take an awful lot of stock in genial old Jack Garner of Red River County, Texas, and his earnest efforts to reduce our tax burdens at this session. I know that genial Jack in the House and good old Furnifold Simmons of North Carolina in the Senate are the recognized leaders of the minority in matters of taxation and that theoretically they are the lads to whom we downtrodden citizens in the lower brackets, regardless of our party affiliations, have to look for anything beyond such relief as is left over after the rich men of the Republican party have finished relieving themselves. Ordinarily my heart would warmly beat in sympathy with Jack and Furnifold and I should resent the chill lack of interest evinced by Mr. Mellon and Mr. Coolidge in the matter of tax reduction, now that the high bracket boys have theirs and the Presidential campaign is two years off.

To tell the truth I do resent the utter insincerity in the Presidential refund gesture and the Mellon credit suggestion; but what keeps me from warming up to Jack and Furnifold is the memory of how completely we of the common people were let down by this noble pair at the last session and how earnestly they joined the Republican machine in putting over on us the outrageous idea that the way to lighten the load of the little fellow was to cut the taxes on the big boys first and most. A fine theory, I say, for the big boys if they can get away with it—which they certainly did and largely because of effective and vitally necessary aid from genial Jack and honest old Furnifold given at the right time and in the right way. I have not space here to go into the details of how they helped and it would be but burdensome repetition if I had.

It is enough to say that I am one among quite a few who have not forgotten the means and manner by which the minority tax leaders aided in riveting into our tax system the Mellon idea in such a way as to make it sure to stay there for a long, long time, thus protecting the hugely wealthy from any tax they will really feel, removing the check on the dangerous accumulation of money in individual hands and opening wide the way for the multi-millionaires all to become billionaires. When I think of these things I do not get enthusiastic over Jack and Furnifold. They did their share toward making the control of the America of the future by the great money men more sure and more complete than it is now. For Jack and Furnifold to come along this time with a plan of tax reduction which cannot by any chance get through and ask us to burst into cheers is a little too much to stand. It may be a sinful thing to say but if they get soaked good and hard it won't spoil a single day for me.

Speaking of genial Jack of Red River County makes me think of that Prince of Good Fellows, Speaker Longworth. They are such warm, warm friends—Nick and Jack—that when you speak of one you naturally think of the other. I am told by those who know him best that within the last few weeks the Prince of Good Fellows has become discouraged over his Presidential prospects. It is not only that the small matter I pointed out in this place some weeks ago—to wit, the impossibility of his getting solid backing from his own state—has become plain to him, but he has recently reached the conclusion that there isn't anything else to the situation but another dose of Coolidge. The development that has brought the Prince to this depressing conviction is the recent declaration in favor of more Coolidge by his intimate friend and walking companion, James W. Wadsworth, himself. Just a few days ago James, or as he is sometimes called, Jimmy, in a New York interview or speech—I forget which—plumped flatly for the good Calvin and another term, thereby severely jolting all those who have been more or less successfully concealing their yearnings for the next Republican nomination—and none more so than the Prince. Of course it is easy to see and to sympathize with the personal political reasons back of the Wadsworth jump. Is not Oggie Mills now a part of the Coolidge administration and is there not talk already in the newspapers about Oggie's being a candidate for the Senate in 1928? Clearly Jimmie can't afford to have an administration candidate in the field against him. It might be that Mills is personally too fond of Jimmie to run against him, but then again perhaps he is not that fond. Anyhow as that Senatorial nomination in 1928 is the one way back for Wadsworth, he cannot afford to take the chance.

Coming out for Cal has not, I think it fair to state, increased Jimmie's popularity with his Republican colleagues in the Senate. There are others besides the Prince of Good Fellows who are privately pained at his performance and it is being somewhat bitterly pointed out that had Jimmie been elected last November he would not have come out for Cal or for anybody else. Had he been reëlected, safe in the Senate and secure in his state leadership, he would have been busy nourishing a very lusty Presidential boom of his own. "You wouldn't have heard a peep about Coolidge and 1928 from Jimmie if he had won," growled an Old Guard Senate leader the other day. "He would have been for rotation in office and an open field if he hadn't been licked."

Be that as it may you certainly have to be squint-eyed with prejudice against our noble President not to admit that the Wadsworth declaration advances him several big jumps toward the 1928 nomination. Between them Jimmie and Oggie can certainly deliver New York in the convention and that means a lot. The Corn Belt boys will have to go some to head Calvin off. The Wadsworth

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declaration has brought the first wan smiles to the unhappy countenances of ex-Senator Butler and good old Papa Stearns since they fully grasped the dreadful fact that Massachusetts had failed to heed the Presidential voice.

But do not from the foregoing gather the idea that the Corn Belt boys have given up hope or that the Lowden movement has slackened. On the contrary it seems to be gathering headway and there is every reason to expect a genuine fight in the convention. Even some of our leading syndicate writers with the strongest known administration bias concede that the signs of a real organized anti-Coolidge campaign are unmistakable. My personal opinion is that the odds are all against the success of the movement, but it is at least interesting—and encouraging—that it does exist. Moreover you cannot tell about politics in this country. It is possible for things to slide out from under Mr. Coolidge just when they seem most solid. So long as he has less than a majority of pledged delegates in the next convention, so long is the result uncertain. I forgot to say that I would not be surprised at any time now to read in the public prints a declaration in favor of Calvin for another term from the Prince of Good Fellows himself. His state is going to be for the President anyhow so he may as well be too. If I were he, however, I should wait. He is in no such jam as Jimmie and there is a chance he may guess wrong.

T. R. B.

Washington.

The Constant Nymph

The Constant Nymph, adapted from the novel, by Margaret Kennedy and Basil Dean. The Selwyn Theatre, December 9, 1926.

IN The Constant Nymph we have the genius Sanger writing great music in his mountain home, with the children of his wives and women there, the mistress, the admiring visitors, the helter skelter. The scale of the book's measurements is that of comedy, a glittering, out-of-joint world where great creation goes on in art, and in life reckless creation, beings tossed into life with feelings and lives to lead, to find their way, to love, prosper or die. The undertone and much of the incident is ironically tragic, full of thought, full of feeling amounting almost to genius in its range. The first half, or till the characters get to England at least, is a delightful texture of wit shot through with feeling; few beginnings are so happy as that of the contrasted visitors arriving to see Sanger, of the daughters with the pig from the butcher's sitting up in the carriage, the mistress and her hot, easy ways, the birthday entertainment where the family is as much at home and as serious and gay with art as most families are with food. The style is quick and lively, it sketches and glances along, and seems to breathe that high bright air where Sanger takes his refuge. Everything, the philosophy, the style, the scene is poignant and sparkling.

But when the scene goes North and the matter darkens this style no longer carries it. The author begins to tackle heavier or at least grayer stuff. We have jealousy, dull conformity and suffering that is more difficult because more puzzled and dumb than the crying and flaming in the Sanger house, before this genius died and their English kin came down to carry off the daughters. We have what looks like an analysis of genius finding a home in society —an overwhelming theme. We have at last death and deliverance. The method is no longer fitted to the content, and from the discrepancy a sense, alas, of superficiality and of mere fictionistic making it up begins.

The play in many respects, certainly in the latter half, seems better than the novel. The characters are present, the author's vehicle is left only as dialogue, the emotions come to us warm and undiscussed, not in lively sentences and paragraphs but created in voice and gesture. But even at that some of the speeches have still the specious tinge of fiction left on them, they talk effectively, remonstrantly, their emotion is not so much theatre emotion as it is the soft and explanatory heat of novels. On much the same grounds the first act is much less remarkable than the book. People who have not read the book must find this crowd of names and deeds most difficult to catch. And to convey that Sanger house with its vagaries of food, feeling, flares and confusion, takes time, more time than a stage act has at its disposal. It needs time for the reader, too, a certain mellow sum of wit and tragedy awaits our contemplation and digestion, when what seemed funny is now sad and what sad, funny, and the whole seems supple, glinting and pitiful.

As it stands now The Constant Nymph taken as drama suffers most from external causes. The theatre is much too large for it; we need smaller distances not only for the ears and eyes but for the whole impression of the life portrayed, its stream and exchange and interweaving. The length of the performance is excessive, twenty minutes could come off and nothing lost. Some of the characters are not well cast, Trigorin, the Russian admirer, and Jacob Birnbaum, the patron of both the musician heroes, the seducer and then husband of a Sanger daughter, are both only passable duplicates of the characters in the novel; and Linda, the blousy, voluptuous and sluttish mistress, fares very badly at the hands of Miss Marion Waring-Manley, so badly as to throw the first act out of joint—she should be one of the most absurd and ominous figures in the situation.

The inner conditions of the play are sound. It implies the novel and is of course illuminated by it: but it by no means depends on the novel for its point and understanding. The diversity of character and motive in it is remarkable; the pathetic end is inherent in the gayest parts of it; the persuasion of its moods is expertly secured. Few dramatizations of a novel are so wholly taken out of it and yet so roundly independent and complete in themselves.

The rôles of Sanger's daughters, or the three of them that were blessed with one mother and that one married to their father, are bits of fine casting; Miss Helen Chandler, with that extraordinary gift that she brought to The Wild Duck, something violent, childish and fluent all together, plays Paulina; her outbreak at the end of the second act, when the English cousin has taken Teresa's be-

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loved from her, I shall not forget. Miss Beatrice Thomson has a sort of stubborn-minded, homely, persistent quality that gives Tessa a touching reality; you believe in her odd little nobility of soul, her child's passion and adolescent passion, her gallant little way of living. The rôle is now and again distracted by the writing in it, but for the most part is moving and intense. To the last scene, where Tessa dies on the night of her flight with Lewis Dodd, Miss Thomson brings such insistence and purity of feeling as we rarely see on the stage.

In the novel the woman that Lewis marries is made up of courage, confusion, snobbery, sex instinct and the overlaid polish of the kind of life to which she has been accustomed. As a figure in the machinery of the plot she is convincing and as an outline. In detail she is sometimes mere words, a novelist's writing. On the stage at the Selwyn Miss Lotus Robb gives a fine performance of the character, even all through, hard, poised, not without pathos, too. She succeeds entirely in avoiding the pitfalls of the obvious stock qualities that such a rôle will usually sift down to in the theatre, a mere stage foil to other characters.

The part of Lewis Dodd, Sanger's disciple and the one developed male character in the play, is acted by Mr. Glenn Anders. Mr. Anders has gone so far in the rôle and shows so much delicacy and gentleness of feeling in his portrayal and such sincerity of approach that we must consider what might get him farther along with it. In the first place, then, he might study Jean Christophe, what the cost is there of creation in art, what destruction and divinity, joy and death follow the artist's course in himself and among other human beings. With all this urge and peril Lewis Dodd needs to be more deeply touched than Mr. Anders makes him. The cruelty, egotism and sincerity of such a man, his direct and consuming part in life, and the reason why a woman might prefer to have one-tenth of him to all of most men—these and other elements in the character remain for Mr. Anders to explore and add to his conception. And he must avoid above everything the temptation to think his man a dear odd fellow, it is all deeper and more inevitable than that.

Mr. Basil Dean brings to the production of The Constant Nymph his fine sense of shading and detail, and of what he does better than anybody else in our prose theatre, the management of the emphasis throughout.

STARK YOUNG.

Some Movie Disproportions

THE opening of the Paramount Theatre a few weeks ago was in several ways an event of importance. The architecture of the building, which is placed at the heart of Times Square, I leave with confidence to Mr. Mumford's discretion; the display of stones chipped from notable sites around the world, constituting in the lobby a Hall of Nations, is a rather feeble tribute to the world-wide acceptance of American films, and specifically of the films of the Famous Players-Lasky combination. The auditorium fulfills one great obligation: its seats are comfortable and one can see from every point. On the opening night I missed Will Hays's speech, which gave me comfort, I heard Mayor Walker declare that this theatre was built because there were more people in New York who wanted to laugh than who wanted to "crab"; I heard a song and saw a dance; there flickered before me excerpts from an entirely undistinguished lot of old pictures; an elaborate "presentation" ushered in a more interesting résumé of the history of the movie. At 11:25 when I was compelled to depart, the feature picture had not been shown. It is reported that for the opening week the theatre took in over $80,000; so far I have not heard one word of praise for the picture shown. If you wish to be tragic about it, you may sum up the most elaborate achievement of our current movies as a theatre without a picture.

Tragedy, however, is excessive. The disproportion between the building effort and the cinema effort should not induce a disproportion in criticism. Paramount is now the great norm of the movies. It turns out a vast number of films which are the standard, both in regular feature films and in specials. An outsider may find a new vein, an importation may take hold, another big company may have a success, but the average film will be found coinciding almost foot for foot with the average Paramount product. In general that product is well made, and if, at the moment, it seems more than a little dull, the reasons are not far to seek. The specials, What Price Glory? Old Ironsides, Beau Geste, the forthcoming DeMille opus, are distracting the attention of all directors, and of all companies, from their regular features; and the movies have entered into the doldrums, and know it. Paramount is an enormous business living uneasily in sin with an art. To sanctify the union, it experiments with intelligence, trying sincerely to incorporate new literary talent (American) and new directoral talent (imported) without making the product unpalatable. The lowbrow movie critics allude with contempt to the humility with which even Famous Players treats great names; humorists, dramatists, novelists, critics, all have their fling in Hollywood or Astoria. There is not, in fact, any other entirely satisfactory way to improve the movie.

One questions still whether the sheer bulk of a hundred films annually, all of them good average film fodder, does not crush out the tiny atoms of intelligence. One questions why, if Paramount considered Griffith a great director, it did not turn him loose on its lot with a large amount of money and absolute freedom, to make a masterpiece or a mistake; instead of setting him to do what in effect a hundred other directors could have done. Above all I wonder why the effective head of the movie industry still lacks a bureau of research—not in technique of material, but in technique of directing. If there are not five established directors who would welcome the chance to experiment, there must be a hundred intelligent aspirants whose experiments would be even less costly. To give a few directors freedom would be, in the end, as profitable an undertaking as giving New York a new theatre.

Famous Players has partly created the current movie and partly been created by it. It is entertaining to read in Terry Ramsaye's two-volume account of the movie's history (A Million and One Nights, Simon and Schuster)

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how time after time the movies took their masters and stood them on their heads. Famous Players—the very name—is an example. The original intention, which brought over Sarah Bernhardt in Queen Elizabeth, was to present famous players of the stage in famous plays from the stage; and the result was that a little blonde, almost unknown on the stage, became the mainstay of Famous Players, defeating the great names and asserting in practice (and popularity) the independence of the films. That was Mary Pickford. The fact that it took the movies some ten years to learn the lessons she taught them may also be noted.

The disproportion in Mr. Ramsaye's book is purely editorial. Roughly one-half of it deals with the invention of the projector and camera; the story is written with animation; it has journalistic skill; it marshals the evidence persuasively in favor of Thomas A. Edison not as the sole inventor of the moving picture apparatus, but as the developer, at the significant moment, of the one apparatus upon which all future apparatus was based. (Whether the French and English claimants will tear down the plaques they have put up, is problematical.) Too much, however, is made of this part of the story; the rest, the fantastic stories of the ignorant and the inspired who went into the movies, for money and for fun, is the better portion. The accidents and litigations, the stories of privations and millions, are all entertaining; as the book is critical only by implication, it does not clearly sketch the great lines of development; one has to mark for oneself the changes from early trick movies to Westerns, from Westerns to serials, and so on through the feature film and the spectacle.

The first bill put on at 66 Fifth Avenue, New York, seems to me to achieve perfection. It is, oddly enough, the same bill, in essentials, that I saw in Paris three years ago, but in Paris the theatre was on the Boulevards and attracted a general, not a special, audience. There was, this time, an interesting short subject dealing with the Parasol Ants (in Paris the Soviet ice-breaker film, the best short subject I have ever seen, took this place), then, without any "presentation" whatever, Caligari and Chaplin's A Dog's Life and a badly cut version of Beaumont's abstract movie. The virtues of these films separately are now known; the virtue of putting them together, of affording a movie evening in which every item gave pleasure, most of it legitimate moving picture pleasure, is to be remarked. It is to be remarked also that the venture was a success; the small theatre was crowded; profits were taken in. Here, to stick to my text, the notable disproportion was between the goodness of the program and the smallness of the theatre; if the movies are good for anything, there must be in New York an audience ten times the size for such supremely good movie fare.

Raoul Walsh's direction of What Price Glory? shows a great many influences. The old Griffith touch, the von Stroheim touch, the King Vidor touch—all of them could have been used without inviting comparison; but Mr. Walsh, elsewhere inventive and interesting, let these influences appear in bits which repeated the bits of his models. A mooning love-sick soldier posed exactly as Griffith's soldier did in The Birth of a Nation; the pigs from the Merry Widow reappeared as geese, but precisely in the same positions and with the same effect. The fact that The Big Parade came first and was in the same tone, made What Price Glory? a parallel, not an achievement; it had the same high moment as the earlier film: the advance of the Marines through the barrage; comparing a film seen last week with one seen last year, I think the new one is better; the effect of the men marching under the trees (overprinting possibly was used here) is quite fine. The other point stressed in the film is the use of profanity, not in the titles, but on the visible lips of the characters. This is not important. The rowdiness and immorality of the earlier scenes, quite freely and refreshingly done, is more than corrupted by the sentimentality of the central story—exactly what Stallings and Anderson wanted not to do in the play has been done in the film.

GILBERT SELDES.

Hell As I Know It

THE study of demonology has nowadays fallen into neglect. The demons are a dwindling race and, since the abandonment of Hell, we can no longer expect the subject to excite the same interest as in the past, when it so often commanded the attention of the ablest and most brilliant minds. Modern writers such as Huysmans, Poe and Algernon Blackwood who have dealt at all with the demon world have done so rather from the point of view of its picturesque or startling possibilities as material for fiction than in the thoughtful and thorough-going spirit of Sinistrari or Cotton Mather. It may, however, be not without interest to give some account of the present status of the devils and to describe their habits and activities as they appear in our own day: the writer has enjoyed unusual opportunities for observing them—has even, during certain periods, lived among them (from necessity and much against his taste); and he has made a special effort to understand them and to ascertain their characters. These notes are presented with no attempt to exploit the sensational possibilities of the subject, but merely as a sociological sketch of these beings as I have found them in their everyday pursuits and in their ordinary relations.

It does, as I have intimated, require a special effort, on the part of a human being, to understand the demon character. We are so much in the habit of interpreting the behavior of the non-human creatures we encounter in terms of human nature; it is so easy for us to ascribe human motives to the inhabitants of the supernatural world, who have often a superficial resemblance to human beings, and to judge them by the same standards as ourselves. But, if we approached them as we approach the animals, we should be less likely to misunderstand them—or rather, since the animals do share with us some primitive emotions and instincts, we should do better to bring to them the same point of view as to the entities of chemistry and physics, whose reactions leave us perfectly unmoved. *In any case, we must remember that the devils are in everything absolutely unhuman and that nothing we know of human conduct can throw any light upon them.*

When I say that the devils are unhuman, I do not

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mean merely that they are without human institutions or that their society differs from ours, though both these things are true. Since the banishment of their emperor, Satan, and the disbanding of the infernal host, deprived at once of a country and a leader, they have had neither politics nor religion. The old religious spirit of Hell, which has in its time fortified so many martyrs and inspired so many fine works of art, is today practically dead: without a god which his worshipers can figure as at once carnal like themselves and divine, there can no longer be a cult; and without a cult, there can be no religion, in any real sense of the word. As for politics, Mr. Cabell has said that Hell is a democracy; but this is no longer true: it is more nearly an anarchy. The devils still legislate, or rather, a few of them do; but the others pay no attention to the laws and, indeed, rarely know what they are. Nor do the devils ever vote. An occasional attempt is made by some eloquent fiend with a gift for demagogy to lead a movement for the restoration of Hell; and it is sometimes possible, on these occasions, to arouse considerable numbers of demons, who parade back and forth with torches, uttering concerted cheers. (Their cheering sounds rather like our college yells, but is strident, mechanical and displeasing.) But this enthusiasm does not last long: the sight of a hold-up, an unexpected murder or a pair of dogs at the street-corner is enough to divert them from their crusade. They have, in fact, never, even in the great days of Hell, been capable of real devotion to an ideal, but only of a sort of mob fury, which Satan had the power of exciting: the coöperative spirit, the foresight, the idealism and the discipline which are the accompaniments of human enterprise, whether in politics, religion or business, are quite unknown in the demon world. The devils are essentially individualists: each is simply out for himself. They are, therefore, utterly indifferent to others, not only in their relations to human beings, but also among themselves. Their instincts are all mischievous and maleficent. We are in the habit, on this account, of censoring their actions as perverse; but this is to impute to them a moral intention of which they are altogether innocent. These impulses are as natural to them as magnanimity and benevolence are to us. When we see a demon befouling a public place, spitting at a person who has been run over by a motor-car or kicking a man who has been arrested by the police and is powerless to defend himself, we are not to conclude that these acts are inspired by anything properly describable as malignancy, but rather that they are comparable to reflex actions, as when one's leg twitches at being hit below the knee. This is what I mean when I say the devils are unhuman and that it is difficult for human beings to understand them.

It is perhaps particularly in their sexual relations that the subhumanity of the devils strikes us. These relations are entirely undignified by the loyalty, the high ecstasy and the romance characteristic of human relations. Many of the demons do not function sexually; but, among those that do—notably, the succubæ and incubi—their matings are wholly physical and transient and involve neither responsibility nor affection. A human being who has seen the demons at close range is not perhaps disposed to consider this unnatural. The more hideous and monstrous types have died out, like the larger and more powerful; and such a bestial and complex creation as the visage assumed by Satan in Dürer's well known engraving would probably be impossible today. The demons have been undergoing a process of standardization and are growing more and more alike every year. Thus, one sees curious modified forms of the pig or the crocodile snout; and where a devil has originally been provided with two faces, the second situated on his buttocks, the unnatural face is seen to have atrophied and its features to be slowly disappearing. Such highly specialized types of demons as are to be seen in the admirable studies of Breughel and Callot are almost impossible to find nowadays: they were the products of a highly civilized society and have no longer any place among the nomadic and outlaw people which the demons have become. A being modeled merely as an obscene parody upon royalty, priesthood or learning finds his occupation gone today, in America at least, where the former of these callings does not exist and where the latter provide their own parodies and make the demons, in comparison, seem imposing; such devils, in another category, as those which consisted of some single organ of the body endowed simply with a pair of frog's legs or of bat's wings have proved unable to survive: they depended upon the protection of a court and have no way of coping with the modern world. Yet the demons which have endured to our day are still sufficiently unsightly and grotesque, and in a sufficient variety of different ways, to appear repulsive to human taste as objects of amorous desire and unviable even to each other. We do not wonder when a female demon, coming straight from the embraces of a male, makes no scruple of jeering and spitting at him in the presence of other female demons or in the presence of another male; or when a male, who has been living intimately with a female, makes her the victim of one of those practical jokes to which the devils are so inveterately addicted—throwing her into the water, robbing and leaving her or hacking off her arms and legs. We should, however, be quite wrong in supposing that the demons resent each other's ugliness: being entirely without ideas of beauty, they are, in consequence, impervious to ugliness and do not even, as has sometimes been supposed, esteem it for its own sake. The demons exchange, in their amorous intercourse, in a manner not unlike ours, pledges of lasting affection and epithets of tender endearment; but these expressions are simple accompaniments of the physical instinct itself and as involuntary as it; they attach no significance to them and we should wrong them in supposing they do. The devils are sterile and unable to reproduce their kind; and neither the desire to have children nor the necessity of providing for their future enters into their considerations.

The fiends have a highly developed literature which admirably reflects their habits and ideas. It is mostly printed on irregular loose sheets which are passed around from hand to hand; and it consists principally of obscene anecdotes and stories of atrocious crime. We must, however, bear in mind, in connection with this literature, that to the demons, whose point of view is so incomprehensible to ours, a scandal is not a scandal, nor a crime a crime: the former they enjoy as a farce and the latter as a practical joke. They have an interesting school of poetry, of

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which the leader is Blashtalatshk. I have met Blashtalatshk and found him a devil of high intelligence. His horns are rudimentary and his lower jaw is lacking; but his enormous black eyes are among the wildest I have ever seen. His poetry and that of his fellows is, of course, entirely devoid of the moral ideas and the passionate and noble emotions which distinguish human poetry today: it is exclusively occupied with the representation of sights, sounds, smells and sensations, which the demons recreate with great vividness and with a high degree of complexity which sometimes produces an effect of incoherence. These sensations are not, to be sure, those which give pleasure to human beings, but, in most cases, directly the opposite; yet we must remember that the attraction of a devil toward a sewer or a piece of carrion is as natural as that of a human being toward Horace's fons Bandusiæ or Waller's lovely rose. I will, however, quote an example of demon poetry (from Blashtalatshk himself) which can give no offense to human taste:

MRASHTALOTL BRAKSHALOX

O mrakshakak O mrashtalotl
O bratsh O bratshakak
O mrungsh O mrungshakishku
O gratshalakshalotl
Gibilnabu gibilnablee
Gratshalax gretshalax gratshabrakshabrotl
Bratshabrotl

UNCOMFORTABLE INCIDENT

O discomfort! O wretched chance!
O unpleasant! wretchedly unpleasant!
O excruciatingly uncomfortable!
O horrible drowning and cramp!
I was caught in the rain-spout, tail up, head down:
The water came down in torrents.
I thought it was the end of the world.

One of the most interesting figures in demon literature, however, is the poet Prezzbo Brox, who has developed sensibilities so alien to his race as almost to give him an affinity with humanity. He has always, on this account, been regarded by his fellows as abnormal and treated with suspicion. Some years ago, he withdrew altogether from the society of devils and took up his abode in the ground with a mole, for which he had conceived a sentiment resembling affection. One of his omnipresent compatriots, however, with the national passion for practical joking, set a mole-trap for the mole and killed it. Prezzbo's chagrin over this tragedy was striking and some of the finest of his lyrics were inspired by it. I translate an example, which will certainly be appreciated more easily by human beings than by demon readers:

SPRING DRIZZLE

The rain seeps through the sod,
But you are no longer here to keep me warm.
The earth-worms come burrowing by,
But I no longer ask them what pipes are being laid,
Nor where the mangel-wurzel roots are sprouting.

At first, however, infuriated by the murder, Prezzbo had rushed out at once from his tunnel, pursued and captured the guilty demon and nailed him down to the floor of an old barn, where he compelled him to swallow a gallon of prussic acid. Demons are practically indestructible, but more easily affected by chemicals than by violence. In this case, though the victim was not destroyed, his internal organs were mostly eaten away: he was never able to talk again, but could only utter a low croak, and his mental faculties were thought to have been impaired. Prezzbo afterwards felt the acutest remorse for his relapse into demon nature: through the special development of his moral sensibility, what seemed amusing and proper to his fellows (who treated him with much more confidence after this incident) came to present itself to Prezzbo as degrading and horrible. In his revulsion of feeling at what he had done, he composed one of the longest and most impressive of his poems, which afforded the author himself much relief and which has been greatly admired by those demons sufficiently cultivated to appreciate the exquisite art of a production of which the subject is unintelligible to them.

It might be thought that the demons, with their detachment and their capacity for purely intellectual development, should have distinguished themselves in the field of science; but they are too restless and capricious. The continuous application required for scientific study is impossible to them.

I have said that the devils were a diminishing race; but they are not perhaps without their importance for us humans. They have, it is true, been dispossessed of their domain and their principal strength is, therefore, broken; but, for this very reason, we have them more constantly with us, and with us in greater numbers, than probably at any period in the past, when they were dwelling securely in Hell. Since the War, in particular, finding us demoralized and weakened, they have been prompt to take advantage of our plight; and one is forced all too often nowadays to recognize the traces of their activity or influence. This is deplorable; and all the more, that the success of these anti-social beings should follow on an event which called into play, in their purest and most dazzling form and on a scale probably unprecedented, the heroic capacity for coöperative effort and the triumphant idealism of humanity.

EDMUND WILSON.

The Ewe Lamb of Widow Jazz

LADY JAZZ was introduced to select musical society two years ago in Æolian Hall, but contrary to the usual impression her sponsor was not Paul Whiteman: she advanced, hand and fingers outstretched, on the arm of Mme. Eva Gauthier toward the close of one of the extraordinary programs of that exceptional artist. At a nearby piano there sat—this is a Thomas Beer scene—a young man named Gershwin, who presently played Alexander's Ragtime Band. There is reason to suspect that the slightly flustered débutante with the familiar features mistook his theme for Mendelssohn's most portentous, but did not falter. If she did suppose herself married into the Blue Book by way of the family of vocalists, if she still

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cherishes the delusion, she must now consider herself, at best, bereaved. Was Mme. Gauthier's example speedily or generally followed by her peers? It was not. Did that realist herself, after one pleasant season's tour with her protégé, suggest a second? Eager ears caught no such hint. Having made her gesture, a gracious one and worthy of the complete eclecticism of her taste, she felt no obligation by that token to become rumored about as a jazz singer out of a part; and then, she had not, if she could have, brought herself to sing Do It Again as it wishes to be sung. Sooner or later it would have sunk through the last auditory head that they do these things better at the Palace. When Gershwin, no longer a mere "composer at the piano" but a star in his own right, accompanied Mme. Marguerite d'Alvarez in Nashville Nightingale at the Hotel Roosevelt the other day, he was obliging the first prominent follower of Mme. Gauthier's example. By the time hats were reached for, all was beautifully clear: where her predecessor had stood and sung, Mme. d'Alvarez, recognizing that something more was called for, *acted*. Duty calling, she rolled a mean eye and she tapped a wicked foot—and at that exact point logic tottered: she did not, if she could, bring herself to do a little dance in the half-chorus. If she shouldn't have, yet it should have been done; she carried proof to the point of demonstration and then and there the ear could catch the knell of the Broadway song—as a song—in the recital hall. For good or bad it demands both qualities and accomplishments which there are comparative strangers and which, orchestras and the two-piano team of Arden and Ohman being available, are more important to it than a voice. It sets an examination at which prize pupils of Sembrich, thin and fat, are hopelessly outdistanced respectively by Miss Gertrude Lawrence and Miss Sophie Tucker, and this is not to be borne by the former.

However, even before the Roosevelt recital it was sufficiently plain that the still vigorous and comely relict's ambitions had best be rested not on the vocalists, not on those fickle Latins who trot out highly impressionistic pictures of her for their American tours but, back in Paris, leave them in the trunk; on none of these nor, for the present, on any but the same George Gershwin, and on the state of his health and inclinations. Of her own set, Berlin has not the technical equipment to serve her more gaudy aspirations, Kern has other uses for his spare time, Handy is content to spread wide and without "improvement" the tradition of the spiritual and blues singers, the growing company of talented arrangers arrange for lack of the power to originate, the "serious" group can't write jazz and the jazzists can't write. Without Gershwin, on the other hand, it is improbable that that introduction, two years ago, would have taken place; Whiteman would have had no pièce de résistance for his own glorification-party a few weeks later. Meanwhile he has entitled himself to a share with Kern of the credit for raising the standard of popular music a good twelve notches, alone in one orchestral work and with Grofe in another he has demonstrated that his native language can convey something far beyond musical anecdotes, in the introductory measures of his least-praised score—that of the operetta One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street—he has actually employed the most blatant jazz to carry a premonition of tragedy.

Yet everything he has written other than musical comedy numbers has been work of love. If the Rhapsody in Blue turned out a best-selling phonograph record no one expected it less than he; he counted—and again and rightly in the case of his piano concerto—on a heavy financial loss, and must anticipate as much in any future experiments of the kind. At the same time he can apparently bank on success for any show he sets to music; such work moreover expresses and accordingly satisfies his humor, malice, energy and his sense of rhythm, such a perfect piece of song-making as his Do, Do, Do in the current Oh, Kay! (a song so catchy and so at home in its original surroundings that it is with a shock one realizes it is quite "straight," has a totally unsyncopated melody) represents the bringing into play of no mean degree of melodic invention; the symmetry and general rightness of its miniature structure does credit to the musical architect. There is, then, enough in this highly lucrative work to give an artist the feeling of a difficult task well executed, and Gershwin has no other incentive to push farther or higher than growing imagination and ambition, and those confronted by the fact that labor of love is less lovely when it is overtime—a fact which takes out of point the examples of men of means who choose work as against daily idleness.

It is probable that the five new piano preludes which he played for the first time at the Roosevelt did not cost him an excessive amount of overtime, but were presented for what they are worth, recent by-products of his plenteous invention, and not to prove anything whatever. One was a frank salute to Chopin; one criticized the crudity of the ragtime in Debussy's Golliwog's Cakewalk in just the way one clog-dancer would choose to criticize another's step; one was built on a theme written but not used for the famous blues movement of the Concerto in F; one might be a song deprived of its words; one started on the docks in New Orleans, to find itself shortly joyously footing it in Madrid. Yet every one should be published, none could have been written by another composer; the set exhibited the hard transparent surfaces, the fire-refracting facets and the cool blue depths of a circlet of well cut aquamarines and diamonds. No evidence is lacking, in short, that if he chooses to go on Mr. Gershwin has only fairly started, that the end for him lies around a number of corners.

Just how many corners he may round cannot easily be prophesied. So far he has been faithful to his schooling, has put to new uses but yet retained the accents they like in the dance-halls. Were he utterly to drop those, what would remain? Certain of his peculiar brilliancies, if he were to tackle the larger musical forms again under such circumstances, would have less opportunity to divert attention from the weakness in thematic development which he has thus far given reason to suspect, a weakness which, if remediable by further technical study, presents hardly less of a problem for that fact. And were that mountain surmounted, actual greatness is another matter. He has not attempted the loftiest heights, and perhaps he is waiting or perhaps he is wise; at any rate here we go beyond what one has the right to ask save from the admittedly great. The immediately interesting if not exciting question is what possibilities he can point out in a despised argot, that we failed to suspect before he began using it. Mr.

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Ernest Newman sets jazz down as too feeble and limited a means of expression for anyone to touch who has anything to express. If it were to be pointed out to Mr. Newman that Gershwin's concerto was supposed to express something of considerable local interest, namely The Spirit of Young America, he might reply that according to the testimony of the composer that spirit must then be the Charleston and the blues—in which case it was most thoroughly expressed—but that the question remained whether, should one want to look at Young America from another angle, or look at quite something else again, one would seize anew on jazz. Foregoing available rebuttals to Mr. Newman's imagined comment (which from previous experience is milder than natural), one may yet observe that for any reasonable doubts on the question Gershwin is responsible. May he press his case. ABBE NILES.

Heart and Home

LADIES and Gentlemen, please remember that you are the first group of visitors to be shown through the new New Republic Building (Albert Kahn, architect), and be proud of it. A souvenir will be given you on the way out. It is unnecessary to tell you that the success of our murder (see issues of 1927, 1928, 1929) made this great thing financially possible. You have seen the multiple presses and the editors at work, you have seen the express elevators, the bronze doors and the manuscript-rejection machinery, you have seen the Five-legged-animal-story department and the wine cellar for distinguished guests, you have seen the Dollar Book Department (sixth to twelfth floors), and the Sports Department (twelfth to twenty-fourth floors), and the Lunch Room (twenty-fourth to thirty-sixth floors), and the Sex Department (thirty-sixth to ninety-sixth floors). Now we will inspect some of the more intimate corners of this gr-e-e-at edifice (Warren and Wetmore, architects), the cornerstone of which was laid by President Coolidge in person. On your right is the greatest oil painting in the world (6,015 yards in area), depicting the ceremony. The heads of the historic participants were painted by John Singer Sargent, the costumes by Edwin A. Abbey. Marbleized background by Alma Tadema. Note the figure of Ralph Easley holding the trowel. This one is Judge Gary, there is General Wood, that one with a gr-e-e-at wreath is Mussolini (castor oil by Rexall). The actual wreath is treasured in a safe in the vault. Now we haven't much time left, so I will quickly take you to a few of the rooms where those more personal contacts with its nine million readers which a gre-e-at newsgathering public utility must maintain are maintained. For instance, these people are opening letters sent to the Employment Editor from all over the civilized world. The letters evince great need, and the answers represent a gre-e-at service. Here is the Editor. Mrs. Mipp, will you show us a sample of your work.

Sample.—"Dear Editor—Last night they laid all of us grinders off. I got forty-four payments still to make on our new radio. What shall I do?"

A great strong boy like you oughtn't to have any trouble finding work. I know a lad who is earning eighty dollars a week in his spare time making sawdust for dolls. A lot of bright fellows are in the same boat with you. Remember, there's a silver lining to every cloud, however black. Or you might sell a bond.

"Dear Job Editor: I am a college graduate, with a wife and two-months baby. Nobody seems to have a job for me. I am prepared to take most any job. Do you know of a job? Manual or white-collar job, I don't care what the job is. Please advise me—Jack S."

Jack, I'm sorry for you. The only line open to a man of your qualifications is football, to my knowledge. And, of course, that requires preliminary training. You might not care to make the sacrifice. Remember, "there's a good time coming, if we ever live to see it." What does your little wife say?

"Dear Ed.—I'm not suited to my work. I'm getting eleven dollars a week in a cigar factory, and the dust hurts my eyes. Should I stick or no, or what else is there?—Connie."

Connie dear, the trouble with you is clearly lack of fresh air. Get out into the country, under God's blue sky. Live, live, and play. Forget your cares. Remember as the French say, "When we're dead it's for a long, long while." And drink lots of milk.

Thank you, Mrs. Mipp. Now let us go to the Want Ad Department. Miss Snoles is a very talented editor. When the ads run short of the record, at this moment 1,317,000 agate lines, she has to dictate filler ads out of her head, out of her experience of life. She can dictate 11,000 or more agate lines an hour when in training. Miss Snoles, please.

Sample. — WANTED — Hardwood flagstaff, late model, to exchange for small dynamo, or option Long Island real estate. Kasky, 1316 11th.

WILL SUBLET my mahogany hatrack to confidential party, reasonable. Trouble in family. No dealers. Box X-147.

WILL LADY who stole Ford coupé with Rolls Royce radiator of no value to any one else return same. Reward and no questions. Loopey, Astoria, 6619.

FIRST OFFER takes Bronx 5 sty. 12-fam. tenem. 38x16, cld-water wlk-up. Elect. Bths. Hrdwd flrs. Jantr Irsh. 1st mfg. $5,000, 2nd $11,500, 3rd $16,000, 4th $77,000. Cash $2,500 or what have U.

It's something of a science, ladies and gentlemen. Now up these stairs we shall find the staff which keeps our many many, many readers in touch with literature. It used to be called the Book Review Department, but Miss Clunk, the editor, has installed a new system. Sample, Miss Clunk.

Sample.—"Dear Books: I haven't had the educational advantages some people have had. Please tell me how can I learn to read our gas-meter."

There are several good night schools in your naborhood. Fair proficiency can be attained in eight months hard work. I would not advise your joining a class of more than twenty pupils. And when you get home, practice out loud in your own room.

Much obliged. We will have to hurry a little. On your

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left is the Foreign Affairs alcove, which will scarcely be of any profound interest to you. We are coming into the gre-e-atest but one of all our sub-departments. The Home. All queries with reference to Babies, Panties, Dainties, Christmas trees, Undies and House Furnishings are welcomed here, and duly filed away. Now let's listen to Mr. Pink.

Sample only.—"Dear Mother Still: What is the best drink for the hot weather?—P. Ryan."

The following has found favor with connoisseurs: Take two dozen boxes shredded wheat, boil, rinse and shake thoroughly. Strain two lemons through oilcloth, add celery, gum syrup, arrack and a heaping table-spoonful of best new thumbtacks, beaten up with the white of one egg. Squeeze mixture dry, rinse again, cauterize, pass through collender, decant, rinse thoroughly, bring to a boil and rinse. Skim off residue, pour slowly into strong small hogshead, bung up, haul off and bury in clean white sand for fifteen years. You'd be surprised.

"Dear Baby Department: Little Tiny, aged three, is afraid of fire. I can't seem to make him touch it. Am I a good mother?—Nettie S."

(1) Yes. (2) No. (3) Sometimes.

"Dear Editor—What should a nice girl wear in the daytime? I'm so lonely—Bayside."

Double-basted chiffonette with tulle riser is de rigueur for such occasions, though some prefer guimpes with a European flavor. You can't go far wrong with satin-crêpe, fox-lined, in diagonal stripes, which may be worn at any time, and very often is. Watch the other girls. They are usually right.

"Dear Friend Editor: The furnace is out. What is the best method to relight it, and what do you think made it go out?"

Capillary attraction is often to blame. Have you a cat in the cellar? It will frequently give warning. Next time use plenty of clinker, and blow, *hard*. But there is a low pressure area moving from the Bahamas toward Richmond, moderated by squalls, breezes, and flurries of bilge water. Since we are so sure to have good weather from now on, why light it at all?

There is nothing of a practical or household nature, ladies and gentlemen, which Mr. Pink's department is not unable to deal with. Now I am saving up for the end the most interesting department of all. Here all problems of the affections are coped with, particularly in one famous column, Little Love Talks. Miss Pulse!

Sample only, not for sale.—"Dear Heart Doctor: I am having what my girl friends call an 'intrigue' with a married man, aged forty-nine, who controls large deposits of phosphate of carborundum in South America. Would he be annoyed if he knew I smoked? —Shirley B."

Talk to him frankly about it, Shirley, and try to reach an understanding. You have no idea how far general conversation between private parties will remove misunderstanding. Someday you will meet The Real Man. Could you look him in the eye?

"Dear Pulsie—I need a divorce desperately, before Monday or they will foreclose. Please look around for a nice one, that would not look bad when framed."

Along the celebrated quays of old Paree are many little stalls kept by quaint old men who will provide just what you want. We will mail illustrated catalogue on receipt of ten cents in stamps.

"Dear Love Talks: My latest Daddy won't come across. I have a letter of his in which he says 'Sweetie, I love you true.' How much do you think I could collect by balm-suit in a Jersey court?"

The average award in N. J. courts for similar cases has been $7,831.16 over a ten-year period. But see Keagan vs. Smith, N.J.S.C., II:18, and Kelleher vs. Dubinsky, do., IV:69, passim, which throw light in another direction. Yet why not try?

Ladies and gentlemen, you have seen, now, a little of everything. Goodbye, and thank you. Thank you, Miss Pulse. As you exit, do not fail to take a copy of Fireside Sex, as souvenir of this unique occasion.

ROBERT LITTELL.

The Graphic Realist

The New York Evening Graphic. New York: Macfadden Publications, Inc. Issued serially; each part, $0.02.

FELLOW members of the Admirers' Club: We are gathered this evening to hail the advent of a new genius. A fresh master of romantic-satiric-realistic fiction now swims into our ken. Gentlemen, I give you the name of: Bernarr Macfadden! *(Applause, and cries of "vivid" and his pals, "arresting," "powerful," "gripping" and "waiter: my check.")*

Mr. Macfadden, unheralded and as yet almost unrecognized, is painting a portrait of contemporary civilization second to none. Second, do I say? First: you never saw anything like it in your life.

True, he resembles every other great artist in that he builds on the work of similar towering geniuses who have gone before. Like Dickens, he issues his masterpieces serially, in small, inexpensive parts. Like John Dos Passos, he carries forward several stories at once. Like Browning, he lets his characters speak for themselves. Like Lewis Carroll, he shows you something which changes before your eyes into something else.

For example, from his pages leaps out a phrase, in large letters, "LUST FOR PEACHES." This means something, certainly; but "you look again and see it is" quite otherwise. Snuggled between these words are smaller ones no less important; and the whole, you now perceive, says: "LUST FOR *publicity made Daddy wed, says* PEACHES."

The word "Peaches" as used by Mr. Macfadden is not the plural of fruit, but the singular of young women. It is the nickname of one of his characters, unhappily married to an elderly gentleman called "Daddy." Her case is much like that of Pompilia in The Ring and the Book, a fact Mr. Macfadden gracefully though audaciously acknowledges by calling the pair "the Brownings." Their stormy history is told at great length and with unflagging relish. Sometimes, indeed, the Maestro carries them to a climax where, with magnificent modernism, words are almost abandoned, in favor of the more photographic realism of illustration. He devotes a whole page to a picture of the stricken husband's head, showing him weeping and uttering (in a balloon escaping from his lips) the pathetic plea:

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"Peaches, come back! Or Daddy'll go a-hunting!" Next follows a picture of "Peaches," of the same size. A balloon also issues from her mouth, carrying the words, "Woof! Woof! I want my alimony!" (Woof! Woof! is an affectionate catchword often used between the two.)

Peaches has a monologue in which, after the estrangement, we learn that she "was humiliated when mate advertised color of her nighties." Her suit, she promises, "will bare locked boudoir secrets." She "now doubts his love was ever a wholesome one, and this makes her sad." At one point Mr. Macfadden speaks, in letters about two inches high, of "PEACHES BABY," but the accompanying words in small type make this mean only, "PEACHES *says she wanted a* BABY." Mr. Macfadden adds that "Daddy is a dog hater; Peaches irked."

Daddy himself with Promethean dignity offers his liver to the vultures, and explains the reason:

> Why I am writing the story of my life [under the title, My Love Life with Peaches]: to restore the dignity of one of the oldest names in the United States.
>
> To satisfy my friends who winced that I should suffer silently.

Another of Maestro Macfadden's chief characters is Rudy, a young man of sombre, brooding temperament, whose career descends from woe to woe. I have space for little more than some of the chapter headings: "Rudy dared death for gay party in wild boat ride on angry sea." "New passion born as Sheik played in Nazimova film." "Mate of bigamist? Rudy's romance with Natacha breeds legal war." Rudy, it will be gathered, like the Brownings, has been unhappy in his love affairs. Although in one instalment he "tells how to treat a wife and make married life romantic," before long we learn that "Rudy, champion reel-life sheik, held wife's love only one night," and find that " 'Rudy not a woman's man,' was cry of Jean Acker, his one-night bride."

Mr. Macfadden and his hero face facts frankly. In his diary, Rudy is made to say:

> One of the very first letters I picked up today was from a fan in a mid-western city who asks me to write "the truth about my first divorce."
>
> I pondered long over this query. It is no easy thing to grant. But I feel that I belong to the public. It is my duty to them, so reluctantly I comply.

Turn now from this Dostoyevsky-like passage to the vigorous and martial ardor of another scene, managed by Mr. Macfadden with equal virtuosity. His female character, Sister Aimee, is the embodiment of Resistance to Persecution. Hounded by the law's minions, she refuses to give in.

"They call me 'temptress!' " says Aimee, paragraph. " 'A churchly Cleopatra,' " paragraph. "But my big moment will come," paragraph. "I am beset by the very scorpions of Hell. All my life I have fought the very Devil himself and all his drug and rum crazed satellites. And it is this 'Devil Ring' that is now striking back because they fear me in my great work for the Lord. . . . I have waged unrelenting battle with the BAT-LIKE DEMONS FROM HELL. . . . 'Scheme, scheme, scheme,' cry the pack, snarling at my heels, biting at God's cloak." Yet she maintains steadfastly that she is, as she says, "Martyr, not wanton."

Mr. Macfadden is like many another great artist, in that he refuses to remain anonymously in the background. From time to time he interpolates a few paragraphs which have no relation to the stories of his main characters yet throw a revealing lightning flash upon the days in which they live, the spiritual landscape across which move the actors in his drama. Thus he may be heard from time to time chanting like a chorus:

> Beat two naked girls in reform school.
> Rich Red drops free love.
> Wild parties in soldiers' love nest.
> Two women in fight; one stripped, other eats bad check.
> Amorous barber wins love fight.

Clear as are the philosophy and wisdom which lie behind his cunningly arranged mosaic, the Maestro is not satisfied even with this. He makes his point of view explicit by including in the vast scheme of his work a diary of his own, which makes you think at once of Amiel and Bashkirtseff and even has a touch of Rousseau about it. Jean Jacques, I am sure, would approve Mr. Macfadden's sage advice to those about to marry:

> Cultivate your mind to the highest degree of efficiency, but make your body superbly splendid in its strength and proportion. Then you will be properly prepared for a love romance that should bring happiness sublimely satisfying to you.

In fact, like the acrobats?

I feel that he is a little unfair, however, when he writes, praising a movie actress who got one of her divorces quietly, and advises others who may be about to take the same step:

> Try to avoid making a cheap hussy of yourself regardless of your inclinations.

If ladies stopped making cheap hussies of themselves, how much we should miss from the great scope of the genius of Mr. Macfadden!

Moreover, at other times and in other moods, the Maestro is not without his own touch of a certain sophisticated wordliness. Two of the favorite characters on his crowded stage appear and reappear, not in the text, but in the form of a series of drawings telling the story of successive episodes in an endless double narrative, the Antics of Arabella. From the mouths of Arabella and her girl friend issue balloons in which they tell slightly improper Broadway anecdotes; while near their nether extremities are printed directions for performing a series of calisthenics—a new set in each issue—which the young ladies illustrate by their poses. This might be called playing one end against the other: by following the directions given by the girls' feet, you will be restored to such pristine vigor that you will disdain to accept the set of ideas indicated by their eyes, listing heavily to port or starboard, and by their conversation:

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What is an old maid?
She's the girl who always walks home.
Do you know what a bachelor is?
Sure, he's a guy who never owned a coupé when he was young.

I have called Mr. Macfadden a master realist; and perhaps the phrase needs a word of explanation. It is justified, I feel, by the fact that he concerns himself with the deepest human emotions, reveals them at their great climactic moments, and minces no words in calling a spade a spade, or indeed, a strange-implement-used-by-passion-urged-blonde-vamp-to-kill-love-nest-partner.

Yet it is of course apparent that no such people as he writes about could ever have existed. He calls his imaginary city New York; but I take it he refers to some future version of that metropolis, perhaps a hundred years hence. I trust that this is true, and comfort myself with the reflection that I shall be well dead by then. For great as is my admiration for the genius of Maestro Macfadden, I feel about his characters as I do about hippopotami: I respect them and I don't want to meet any.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Catholic Case in Mexico

SIR: In a recent issue of the New Republic you comment editorally on the attitude assumed by the Bishops of Mexico with regard to the decrees enforced by President Calles.

In appealing to the Congress of Mexico for relief from these Decrees, the Bishops knew that their proposal would have to meet the active opposition of President Calles; of the Minister of Gobernacion, whose Department exercises control in matters affecting the Constitution, and of both Houses of Congress, which by everyone are known to be completely dominated by Calles.

In announcing their appeal to Congress, the Mexican Bishops are quoted by the New York Times as having said that they did so "with no hope of success" and that "the only other course open, starting a religious war, is contrary to the spirit of the Church."

Persons who are familiar with what actually transpired in Chapultepec Palace, when the Committee of Bishops called on President Calles, say that the President himself charged the Bishops with a desire to provoke revolution.

The Bishops replied with indignation and unreservedly repudiated the idea of armed conflict. Indeed, the Bishops have been absolutely firm and constant in their repudiation of all thought of war.

On August 5, an editor of Excelsior, an important daily, published in Mexico City, friendly to the Calles régime, intimated to Bishop Pascual Diaz that the action of the Bishops would mean war. The Bishop, in reply, declared textually: "The Church, which is outside of any political party, will never authorize the proposal that religion be taken as the banner of any party."

You are shocked that these "professed followers of Christ" should even mention war as an alternative. If they did mention war, as is alleged, this only shows that, having considered it, they had repudiated it, as true friends of peace and order and as "professed followers of Christ."

You suggest that "the Church might obey the law while working for its repeal." Suppose the state of New York enacted a law which would compel the Editor of the New Republic to refrain from all mention of political questions in his paper and would deny to him his civic rights so long as he continued as Editor. Would he mildly go on publishing the New Republic, conforming to the law, while he undertook to obtain the amendment of the law?

In refusing to say mass and conduct public worship in the churches, the priests of Mexico are breaking no law. They are simply exercising the right of free men.

Even if we granted that Calles has the right under the Constitution of Mexico to regulate worship as he is seeking to regulate it, it has never been claimed that he has any right to interfere with the personal liberty of the priests so long as their conduct does not offend the law.

You say that the lay apologists of the Church have failed to explain why the Church could not continue to function under the laws of Mexico. Certainly, one who has undertaken the defense of human rights and liberty with such zeal as has been manifested by the New Republic should need no one to explain to him why the Bishops and priests of Mexico refuse to accept the laws which are being imposed upon them. These laws degrade their profession and give to the civil authority final jurisdiction to pass on the fitness or unfitness of the priest.

Perhaps the Bishops and priests of Mexico would have gone on attempting to perform their ministry under the law of Mexico had it not been for the provision of Article 19 of the Calles decree amending the criminal code. This article compels the rector of a parish church to obtain the sanction of his appointment from a committee of ten parishioners designated by the civil authority and, in company with these ten, to appear before the civil authority to register as rector of the parish. This act, if performed by the priest, would constitute a formal acceptance by him of the restrictions which President Calles is seeking to place on the exercise not only of the ministry of the priest, but on all religious practice.

Furthermore, the organization of the Catholic Church everywhere is hierarchical. The Bishop alone has jurisdiction with regard to the designation and removal of the rectors of parishes. To place in the hands of a committee of laymen this jurisdiction constitutes a denial of the right of the Catholic Church in Mexico to its hierarchical organization and can have no other purpose than that of disrupting the organization and breaking down the discipline which is essential to the life of the Catholic Church.

I do not wish to give the impression that the objections of the Bishops are based solely on Article 19 of the decree. The Bishops object to the decree in toto, but they base their refusal to continue the performance of religious functions by priests within the Church on this article, because, were they to comply with it, they would be doing a thing which, in conscience, they may not do.

WILLIAM F. MONTAVON.
Director, Legal Department, National
Washington, D. C. Catholic Welfare Conference.

More Education for Parents

SIR: Your readers may care to know that a ten-day Institute on Parental Education will be held for men and women engaged in work with parents, and for qualified persons who are preparing for such work, from January 17 to January 28, 1927, inclusive at the Headquarters of Child Study Association of America, 54 West Seventy-fourth Street, New York, N. Y.

The Institute will consist of three parts, as follows: ten lectures by eminent thinkers and scientists on contributions of modern science to parental education, biology, psychology, sociology and ethics; round table conferences on the content and subject-matter of parental education, on organization, on methods of instruction and direction, on literature, and on evaluation of results of parental education.

There will be pre-arranged and directed opportunities to visit study groups, clinics, juvenile courts, special classes, institutions, etc.

There will also be ten additional lectures on topics of general interest to those engaged in parental education at 11 o'clock each day during the period of the Institute.

Among the speakers engaged for the Institute are: Prof. Michael F. Guyer, Prof. Ernest R. Groves, Prof. Joseph Jastrow, Dr. Helen T. Woolley and Dr. Benjamin C. Gruenberg.

New York, N. Y. MRS. CORA FLUSSER.

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An Original American

Horace Greeley, by Don C. Seitz. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 433 pages. $5.

NO one shared more fully than Horace Greeley in the typical experiences of the successful American during the second period of the Republic from 1820 to 1871. In the first place he began as the barefoot boy whose precocious talent attracted the attention of his teachers and neighbors. When the Greeley family moved from the poverty-stricken acres of Vermont to Pennsylvania, Horace stayed behind to practice the rôle of the industrious apprentice in the printer's trade. Then at the age of twenty he entered New York. Like Franklin he advanced from printing to journalism. It might have seemed that he missed the great opportunity of his career when he declined James Gordon Bennett's invitation to join him in founding the New York Herald, but after some experiments with a weekly, The New Yorker, and various campaign journals, he set up his own daily, The Tribune, in 1841. Like other serious American journalists Greeley had ideals. Whether because of, or in spite of them, Greeley made The Tribune the most powerful organ of opinion in the United States—the American Thunderer.

Greeley had the American passion for politics. For a time he was junior partner in the firm of Seward, Weed and Greeley—Seward the statesmanlike figurehead, Weed the state boss, Greeley the publicity man—but he considered himself cheated out of his share of the spoils. In 1848 he was given an unexpired term of ninety days in Congress; in 1854 he was denied even the nomination for the lieutenant-governorship. "I should have hated to serve as Lieutenant-Governor but I should have gloried in running for the post," he wrote in his letter of resignation from the firm. He played the part of President maker in 1860, and did not make Seward. His own Presidential bee stung him to death in 1872.

With Greeley practical politics was connected with large plans for human society. He was a natural reformer in an age when reform was in the air. He was the representative in New York of movements which had their home in New England—the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of women, the Fourierism of Brook Farm. From the latter institution he added two recruits to his staff, Charles A. Dana whom he did not like, and Margaret Fuller whom he did. Even his domestic life conforms oddly to a pattern well known in America. Mrs. Greeley was so incompetent a homekeeper that even when the family was in the city Greeley was exiled to hotels; and once when they were at the farm in Chappaqua a guest was surprised to have his host remark: "I guess we had better register at the hotel; you may want to stay all night." Yet he loved his wife devotedly, and shared with her an extraordinary pride in his children, and sorrow at their loss.

The Tribune carried Greeley's reputation from New York throughout the country. He became a national figure, somewhere between Henry Ward Beecher and P. T. Barnum. When he toured the country in 1859, ovations awaited him at every turn. He was always the champion of the West, backing up his celebrated advice to the young man to go there with energetic support of a Pacific Railroad to take him there, and the West reciprocated. He visited Brigham Young, whose organization must have interested enormously a mind so inveterately given to human experiment. A famous episode of the expedition was the Ride to Placerville, which Artemus Ward wrote up—the driver's reiterated advice to his famous passenger whose head knocked a hole in the roof of the coach in response to the jolts of the road, "Keep your seat, Horace," was a bit of humor that swept the country. Indeed Greeley lent himself easily and even, it might seem, eagerly to humorous treatment. His bald head, his goggles, his cotton batting whiskers about his throat, his white hat and coat with pockets stuck full of papers, at least one trouser leg caught at the boot top—all these marked him as an eccentric, and endeared him as a democrat. His personal peculiarities ranging from aggressive brusqueness to gentle absent-mindedness gave rise to anecdotes as numerous as those of the saga of Samuel Johnson. When Charles Dickens made his last visit to America, and was entertained at a banquet by the Press Club, at which Greeley presided, the novelist must have been tempted to see a chairman who might have walked out of Pickwick Papers.

Yet Greeley was more than a figure of fun. He had, like Johnson, a high quality of distinction. The bitterness of enmity with which he was pursued is testimony of this. Hostility grew upon him by leaps and bounds. He early acquired a good measure of the hatred engendered by political and journalistic rivalry in New York. The Tribune's offensive against slavery made the paper and its editor a target for the South and its sympathizers. When in Washington in 1852, busy about Banks's election to the speakership, he was beaten up on the street by a southern Congressman. The Tribune was a great power during the war, but it was feared rather than loved. Greeley's appearance on the bail bond for Jefferson Davis, after the latter had been kept in prison for two years charged with treason, was the occasion for a holocaust of objurgation and vituperation. Greeley was then midway in his history of the war known as The American Conflict. The sale of the first volume had been enormous; now thousands of subscribers welched on their contracts. The weekly Tribune "was refused at post offices by the carload. It had a circulation around 250,000; about 200,000 of this was lost." In these present days of patrioteering defense societies it is easy to understand how Greeley's simple act of decency caused men to identify him with the rebel slave power which he had fought hardest of all to quell.

Greeley's nomination for the Presidency against Grant brought to a focus all this patriotic and partisan bitterness. His campaign as candidate of Republican bolters and Democrats was a comic episode in party history; but it was likewise a bold and honest gesture in the face of such swaggering villainy in high places as the country had never seen. It did not deserve the ferocious treatment which it got from George William Curtis and Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly. But the proof that his fellow citizens recognized that in Horace Greeley they had had and had lost a great man came when a fortnight after the election he lay dead in New York. There was no time for mitigating gradually the harshness of judgment, the cruelty of condemnation. The revulsion had to be instant, and it was complete. Editors who had lavished their fury upon him contended to lay the most ornate wreath of obituary eloquence on his tomb. Curtis wrote: "Since the assassination of Lincoln the death of no American has been so sincerely deplored as that of Horace Greeley." To his funeral came President Grant, Vice-President Colfax and Vice-President-elect Wilson, Chief Justice Chase, and the governors of several states. There appeared that unusual and most salutary spectacle of a nation in repentance.

Mr. Seitz has held a steady pen in writing of Greeley. He has avoided the temptation to exaggeration inherent in

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the subject. Since he had Greeley's own ample Recollections of a Busy Life to guide him in the earlier part of his labor, his chief contribution is his story of the years after 1860. Even here so personal a journalist as Greeley may be said to have written his autobiography day by day, and in the files of The Tribune and other New York papers Mr. Seitz has found ample material for a sound and luminous narrative. Particularly free from bias is the account of the devious relations of Greeley and Lincoln. During the Lincoln-Douglas debates The Tribune was so generous to Douglas as to lead Lincoln to think that Greeley would be rather glad of Douglas's election; and it may well be, as Mr. Seitz suggests, that Greeley preferred Douglas's "definite and unmistakable program" for dealing with slavery by state action, to Lincoln's "vague phrasings." At the Republican Convention of 1860 he used all his influence to nominate Lincoln against Seward, but when immediately after the election, secession began to spread, the old difference between the two leaders appeared again. Lincoln was first of all for saving the union, even by concession and compromise. Greeley was first of all against slavery. With that institution he would have no compromise even to save the union. "Disunion, should it befall, may be a calamity," he wrote, "but complicity in slavery extension is guilt." When, however, Fort Sumter was bombarded on April 12, The Tribune forgot its earlier attitude and was the most vociferous of the advocates of the energetic prosecution of the war. During all the difficulties with his dilatory and incompetent generals Lincoln found The Tribune's cry, "On to Richmond!" a constant embarrassment. Later when the war continued to drag on and Greeley interested himself in peace proposals from the South Lincoln was perhaps equally embarrassed; but realizing the power which The Tribune exerted he never let Greeley get out of hand. It was a solemnly mirthful occasion on which in January 1862, Greeley lectured at the Smithsonian Institution on The Nation, and President Lincoln and his Cabinet had to attend to be talked to by the editor.

All this Mr. Seitz tells quite neutrally, with a distinct realization of the conflict of temperaments as well as of policies. To Greeley, Lincoln doubtless seemed at times a time-serving politician and a feeble, hesitating commander, but he recognized the firmness of his purpose. In his Recollections he says: "I believe he would have been nearly the last, if not the very last, man in America to recognize the Southern Confederacy, had its arms been triumphant. He would have much preferred death." And again after speaking of his own urgency to prosecute the war to a speedy end: "We have had chieftains who would have crushed out the Rebellion in six months, and restored the Union as it was; but God gave us the one leader whose control secured not only the downfall of the Rebellion, but the eternal overthrow of Human Slavery under the flag of the Great Republic." On the other hand there is no reason to think that Lincoln under whatever provocation ever altered the opinion which he expressed in 1858: "I consider him incapable of corruption and falsehood."

Greeley was assuredly not incapable of error. Few men of equal power were ever so wrong about so many things—except perhaps Doctor Johnson. The inspiration of his story is that he could survive such errors by sheer force of character. As Henry Ward Beecher said: "It is given . . . to see a leader who had taught his followers so true a love of liberty for its own sake, so dire a hatred of oppression and tyranny, that, when they thought him deceived and wandering, they could follow his counsels rather than himself."

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Immigrant Backgrounds

Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem, by Edith Abbott. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 881 pages. $4.50.

A REVIEWER of Doctor Abbott's new volume should not be held to the customary canons of book reviewing in commenting upon it. This is not a book in which a student in the field, having mastered much material, proceeds to present the historical perspective all intertwined with his or her own theory of underlying causes of immigration problems. Instead, this is a collection of source material, reproduced without theory or comment except for brief introductions to each of the sections into which the book is divided. Doctor Abbott writes in the preface: "It is the purpose of the volume to let the documents speak for themselves and to give the student an opportunity to interpret the material for himself." With material that is not selected to illustrate a thesis, and which stands without interpretation, comment must be confined first to a consideration of the adequacy of the material chosen for presentation, and secondly, to the significance of the volume, taken as a whole.

The present book is supplementary to Doctor Abbott's Immigration: Select Documents and Cases, which was issued two years ago, and should really be considered jointly with it. This earlier volume reproduced government reports, statutes, court decisions, immigrant case records and other documents covering the entire period of American immigration. It was a monumental collection of first-hand material for use by anyone interested in the problem of immigration, and it brought together under one cover material that was widely scattered and not available to the ordinary teacher or student, to say nothing of more general readers. The new volume is in every way as carefully compiled as was the first, and should be equally useful. Source books, necessitating as they do a selection of material from scattered sources, are often open to the charge that the selection is uneven if not actually prejudiced. Careful reading of Doctor Abbott's two books makes it apparent that this criticism does not apply to her compilations. The balance shown in her selections awakens the keenest of admiration both for her mastery of the field as well as for her rare skill and judgment shown in bringing the material together.

The new collection covers the history of the "old immigration"—that is, immigration down to 1882, when the federal government assumed control. This marks approximately the point at which the character of the immigration changed. The documents are presented in five groups: (1) causes of immigration, (2) economic aspects of immigration, (3) early problems of assimilation, (4) pauperism and crime and other domestic immigration problems, (5) public opinion and the immigrant. In all there are just over two hundred selections included, and these are taken from immigrant letters, editorials, official reports, political pamphlets, travelers' accounts, charity organization reports and other similar sources. The headings under which this matter is arranged indicate that Doctor Abbott's approach is sociological, and suggest that she sees the immigration movement in terms of adjustment and maladjustment. It was the maladjusted European—the native of Ireland, starving in the famine of 1847 or the German pauper seeking something better in a new land, to cite two examples—who came to this country. Once here he sought a new adjustment, which if successful brought him

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economic security, and if not, made him a contributor to many of the social problems that follow in the wake of unassimilated and insecure immigrants. Moreover, as this suggests, the author presents the immigrant movement not in terms of abstract social forces, but in terms of human beings—individuals—who were trying to better themselves. Although she quotes court decisions, legal documents and official reports, Doctor Abbott never forgets these humble personalities, and among the most significant pages of her book are those that contain the simple records left by the immigrants: letters written to parents or friends in the old country, telling either of success or failure. She has the ability to inject a human quality into a subject that is all too often presented in a manner devoid of it. To make students see and *feel* that immigrants were human beings, and to bring students into the subject from this approach—at the same time avoiding sentimentality—is an accomplishment that deserves praise.

It remains to comment briefly upon the general significance of the book. It is apparent that "the immigration problems of today had their counterparts in the problems of yesterday," and that there is much to be gained by surveying the past out of which the present has come. The justification for so obvious a statement lies in the fact that its truth is today so often disregarded, and that so much of the agitation centring in modern immigration problems ignores entirely the historical background of these problems. For example, the 100 percent Nordics, the Ku Kluxers, even the popularizers of biology, as well as others distrusting alien stocks, often argue as though immigration, and the problems that it introduces, were entirely new phenomena. There is failure to understand and appreciate that one hundred years ago there were individuals who were alarmed because of foreigners, and who were making predictions just as alarming as those made today. Many of the documents quoted by Doctor Abbott in the section on Public Opinion and the Immigrant might have been written yesterday. Actually they were all written in the period of the old immigration. But the arguments are repeated today as though they were the underlying facts of a most recent discovery. It may be that the Nordics are right; it may be that the agitators and alarmists were right in 1850, but when one reads the arguments of those days, recognizes the similarity to the arguments of the present, and then further considers that the dire predictions have not yet been fulfilled, one cannot but feel that there is tremendous lack of perspective and understanding on the part of many who discuss the foreigner and the problems he creates in this generation. There are lessons to be learned from the past; Doctor Abbott's book makes this past available.

There is one fact that because of its implications should be mentioned. Doctor Abbott's documents on Public Opinion and the Immigrant show that down to 1882 none of the arguments against the immigrant and his admittance is based on assumptions of biological or racial superiority or inferiority. Such arguments are of a much later breed. "Those foreigners" have always been subject to suspicion, as the volume clearly shows, but the suspicion and the antipathy of the present day are bulwarked with new arguments drawn from biology and psychology. Whether or not these arguments are sound is not the immediate consideration. The fact is that the age-long problems centring in immigration are complicated by additional factors of recent origin.

MALCOLM M. WILLEY.

Attic Salt on the Eagle's Tail

Plato's American Republic, done out of the original by Douglas Woodruff. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 116 pages. $1.

MR. J. B. S. HALDANE has had thus far a rather brilliant time of it. His personal affairs have been an academic sensation, leading many American newspapers to credit him with a large share of his more distinguished father's scientific achievements in addition to his own. His little essay called Dædalus, written it is said to amuse a club of Cambridge dons, has had a whole generation of descendants. Mr. Bertrand Russell took up the theme; the Today and Tomorrow Series was begun, and it has been spawning prophecies ever since. Plato's American Republic lists twenty-five of its fellow booklets, and there are quite a number of the essential phases of our existence not yet formulated for the future—kitchen stoves, breakfast foods, theosophy, the ultimate dentifrice.

Mr. Woodruff's contribution, more bulky than some of the series but resembling fire-crackers where they are guncotton, describes, in a style that is pretty fair Jowett, the "reactions" of Socrates to his family lecture tour in these United States. Xantippe, of course, was successful with the women's clubs. Socrates was cried down by the Rotary Club of Hootsville, Iowa. This philosophic tragedy seems a weak point in Mr. Woodruff's satire. He underestimates the enveloping power of Rotarian audiences. But usually his spiteful little handfuls of wisdom hit the American bird in a vulnerable spot.

Socrates is overcome by our obsession with personal transportation. He thinks that in "residential cars" we may attain a final happiness, being born and wed and finally dying in them, and "being cremated in the engine without ever having put a foot to the ground." Unless—as Agathon suggests—everybody gets run over before this final perfection.

Greater than the misfortune of owning motor cars, he says, is the disaster resulting from the victory of the North in the Civil War which fastened the rule of the manufacturer on the people and centralized the state in one impossibly huge unit. "Preachers" are the allies of the manufacturers in perpetuating this slavery which replaces the Aristotelian servitude of the blacks. The South has now no voice in the government although the best of the early Southerners were "the very best sort of barbarians." (O hoary and delectable myth!) Preachers naturally never object to things approved by the manufacturers "such as the prostitution of soul which is called salesmanship." They concentrate on drunkenness and gambling, the "pleasures of ordinary men." The chief curse of the Americans is propaganda, however. Being business men they are naturally timid. "I believe," says Socrates, "the American men do not mind dying since it means joining the great majority."

The Dark Cave of Plato's other Republic is now very justly become a movie theatre where men contemplate lies. In spite of their worship there, and in spite of the fact that he attributes to all Americans all the faults he can find in any group of them, the Athenian expects their gratitude. "For I am pointing out," he says, "that unless they reopen the question of the end of living they will grow dissatisfied and exist wretchedly."

It seems to the reader that Americans are likely to answer, "O dæmonic Master, are we satisfied now?"

LYMAN BRYSON.

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The Delicatessen Husband

The Delicatessen Husband, by Florence Guy Seabury. With Drawings by Clarence Day, Jr. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 262 pages. $2.50.

ORDER-LOVING people can bear anything better than this unsettled state of things. Very well, then, they cry, let either sex be dominant. There have been matriarchates in prehistoric times, and it may not be so bad—and anyway, old ironsides will surely weather the storm.

Into all this Florence Guy Seabury insinuates the painful, the intrusive, the disquieting thought that the old peace is fled and no new peace is purchased on any terms. That disinherited figure stood up for judgment and derision at the delicatessen counter. The Delicatessen Husband is the subject of the brilliant discursive studies, some of which first appeared in the New Republic, embodied in her book. These rove here and there over the whole social pattern that has been so wildly jarred by women's move to work outside the home.

Nor is it derision that Mrs. Seabury metes out to this sad figure in this his present delicatessen damnation, but a really sagacious understanding. Dominance sat well on only a few masculine figures—really as few men as women were born for it.

It was a fearful strain to maintain the posture. It is for that part of the male sex which laid down the burden of dominance with relief that Mrs. Seabury speaks with most wit and eloquence. For it imposed all sorts of onerous pretenses—the pretense that all men were virile and aggressive and all women fragile and passive—when anybody could see as frequent proof in contradiction as in support of this myth. Still, with no place to go outside the home, it was expedient for women to concede it. Old-fashioned people were not unaware of the discrepancy between the myth and the reality, but as long as the system jogged along few dared disturb it with heretical questionings. Only now that it lies prostrate can one approach it and see how the thing works.

Mrs. Seabury is a keen feminist, but the return of the matriarchate would seem to her about as welcome as the return of the dinosaur. The arch-matriarch, like the arch-patriarch, was a monstrosity too awful to contemplate. Who would want to hold the pose of dominance long, anyway? But the right to be free of stifling assumptions, to have breathing space for one's ineradicable self, that is worth something. Among much that is shrewd, Mrs. Seabury makes this comment: "Most of us are so dominated by the idea of a vertical dividing line between masculine and feminine character that we do not notice the discrepancy between the pattern and reality. . . . These standardized concepts are part of his emotional equipment, and most of his unhappiness in life is due to the perpetual struggle to fit them to reality." There exists a certain quick divination of life called common sense. It exists in the individual far more often than one would believe from the social form. It must often have saved us as individuals from the past, and may yet intervene to save us from the pseudo-scientific categories of the present. This common sense, and no less, Mrs. Seabury intimates, is the price of peace.

It was an inspiration to turn the book over to Clarence Day, Jr., for illustration. Where the author has wit and good sense and a fine flair for talk Mr. Day has a genius for the comic. His zeal is not the author's zeal for the right but rather for the imperfect human race as it is, was and probably ever shall be. He does not see eye to eye with the author—his is a little cocked. Some of the best of the hundred or so scattered drawings that immensely enliven the book are quite obliquely drawn from mere scattered remarks by the author. "Not all the madonnas are feminine," says Mrs. Seabury in passing—and there is the male madonna, bald, bearded, absurd and yet truly beatified. "A man must be ready to dive overboard to make rescues," says the author—and the gingerly toe that the hero puts into the water points out the injustice of this fate and indicates how great is his distaste for the cold water and Arabella. "Not all seducers are Men," observes the author harmlessly, and Mr. Day achieves volumes of ribaldry in the illustration.

There is no one, unless it be Mr. Max Beerbohm, who can pack as much into a line of writing or drawing as Mr. Day. His is rather the same bland and deadly technique. The drawings have the deceptive look of having been done with a cooky-cutter and they have the point and incision of a diamond drill. He is comic with abandon and passion—which is the only way of delight.

If Mr. Day will not write any more books like This Simian World, let him draw pictures. His is a gift for lucid comment on life that could revitalize even the science of numbers, if he chose so to express himself. His pictures give distinction to a lively book.

REBECCA DRUCKER.

Recent Fiction

Harmer John, by Hugh Walpole. New York: George H. Doran Company. $2.50.

HERE is another novel of an idealist bumping his shins against the realities of a necessarily humdrum existence. To Hjalmar Johanson, who is childishly naïve, comes the idea, which he thinks original, that beauty breeds beauty and that the town of Polchester can be cleansed of its slums, and its people of their smugness and selfishness if someone will only start them in the right direction. But people in Polchester like people everywhere else want excuses for their shortcomings—not directions for doing better, and Harmer John finally pays for his dream with his life. Harmer John is exasperating; so unmodern, so blind to actualities, so thoroughly unreal that one loses patience with him. But if one resents Harmer John, one relishes Miss Midgeley, the little spinster who looks at life without any spectacles, and Mrs. Penethon, unselfish and understanding, Tom Longstaffe, Harmer John's friend, Canon Rounder, the earthy churchman, and Mrs. Bond, the pretty little mischief-maker of the town. It is perhaps the fault of the times that Walpole's idealism does not get across.

M. E. U.

Styrbiorn the Strong, by E. R. Eddison. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. $2.

AGAIN Mr. Eddison demonstrates his extraordinary gift for breathing life and passion into legendary or purely imaginary personages, and for awakening breathless partisanship in their conflicts, triumphs and disasters. His new novel brings the heroic figure of Styrbiorn striding from the remote background of Swedish saga to a doom that becomes acute and intimate tragedy as we follow the relentless course of his destruction. The author as a member of the Viking Society for Northern Research commands a wealth of historical and literary sources. On patterns following those of William Morris he weaves a

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romance more vivid than any of that æsthetic scholar's composition. D. B. W.

Sweepings, the Story of the Pardways, by Lester Cohen. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.50.

SWEEPINGS is a novel of business, intense in its treatment, discouraging in its conclusions. Through the story of the Pardways, Mr. Cohen has set forth the irony of striving for a definite ideal with such intensity that the by-products associated with the attaining of it are overlooked—only to smother the idealist with their full force in the end. This is not a denunciation of wealth nor a moralizing treatise on its distribution. It is fundamentally the tragedy of two energetic and imaginative men who are defeated in their purpose by their own strength. An excellent book: thoughtful, well done, thoroughly readable.

M. E. U.

Blindness, by Henry Green. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.

ONE is troubled by the imaginative power of this tragic tale—tragic, despite the lift of the mystical illumination with which it closes. As a psychological document it is far too convincing for comfort in its classification as fiction. One expects to come across the addresses and telephone numbers of the people so searchingly perceived and unerringly revealed by the "very young" man who may be both subject and author. For "story" there is no more than one would find in any true narrative of personal relationships—emotional incidents significant only in their immediate effect, and making no formal pattern in the life or its record. The book is remarkable as the very inner sense of the experience of blindness suffered by a person naturally hyper-sensitive to beauty in all its forms, material and moral. Reading it, we are sadder but much wiser in this revelation of subtler sense, more penetrating perception, than that of sight.

D. B. W.

A Correction

In our issue of December 22, the publisher of Kyra Kyralina, by Panaït Istrati, was incorrectly stated to be A. and C. Boni. The publisher is Alfred A. Knopf.

Contributors

ROBERT FROST, New England poet, is the author of North of Boston, Mountain Interval, New Hampshire and other books of poetry.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE is the author of seven books of verse, and of the widely quoted sonnet, Tears.

VIRGINIA WOOLF is the author of The Voyage Out, Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, and The Common Reader.

ABBE NILES, a former Rhodes Scholar, collaborated with W. C. Handy in Blues, a recent anthology of Negro Songs.

MALCOLM M. WILLEY is assistant professor of sociology at Dartmouth College.

LYMAN BRYSON, after a number of years abroad in international relief work, is now living in California.

REBECCA DRUCKER was formerly on the staff of the New York Tribune.

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